

The Great Conflict



Lorimer

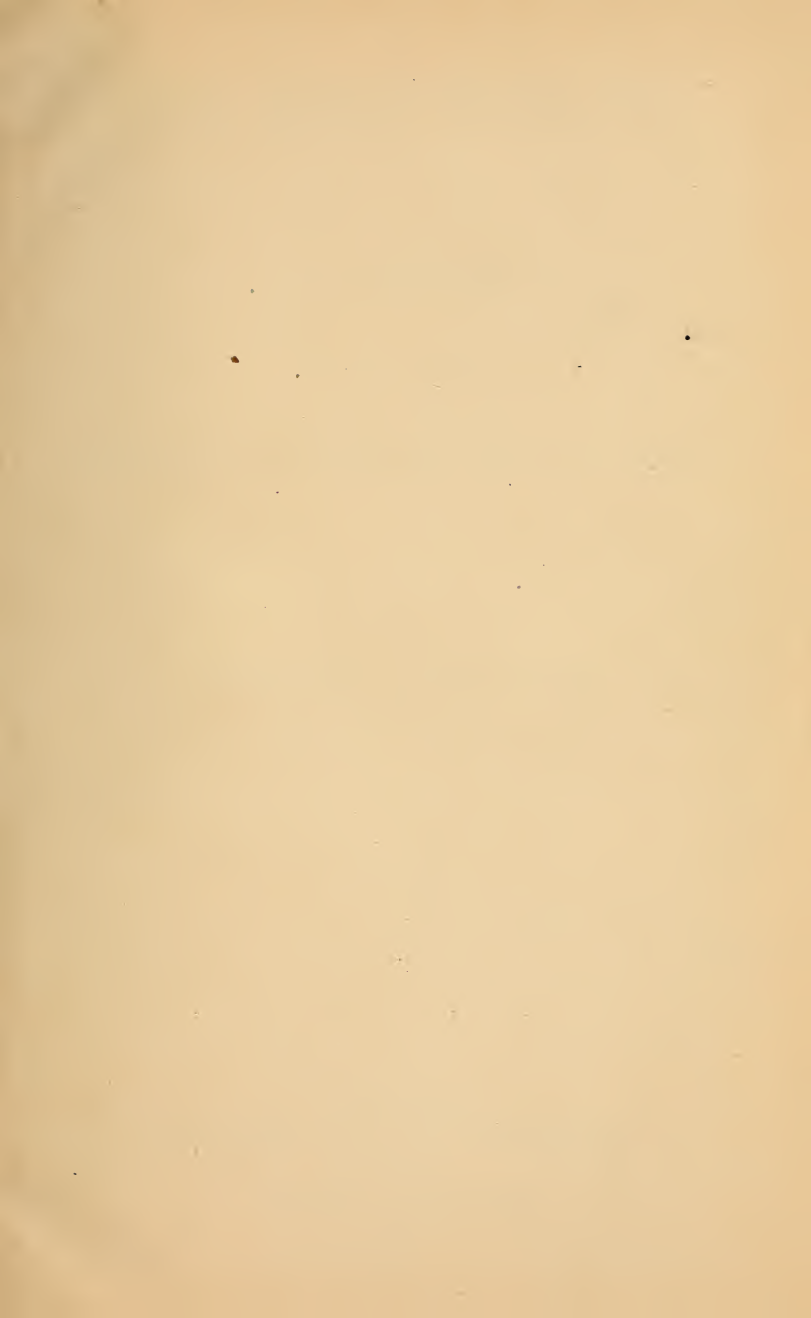
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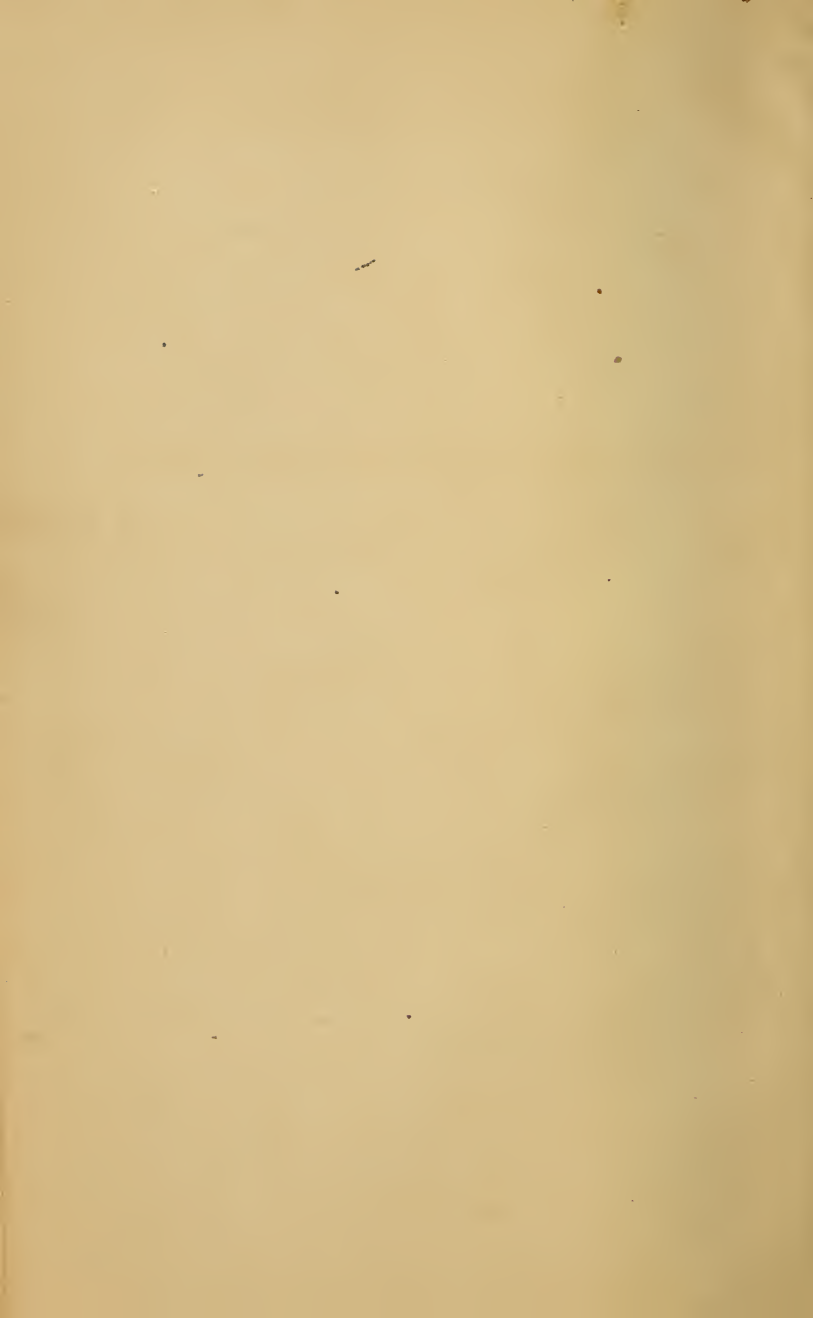
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THE GREAT CONFLICT.

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING BAPTISTS, AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

BY

✓
GEORGE C. LORIMER,

MINISTER AT THE TEMPLE.



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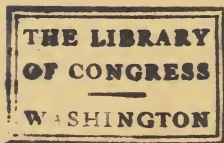
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK :

CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM.

1877.

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1877.

FRANKLIN PRESS:
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TO

REV. W. W. EVERTS, D.D.,

MY FIRST PASTOR AND MY LIFE-LONG FRIEND,

These Pages

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

“ We ought to obey God, rather than men.”

Peter the Apostle.

“ ’Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil.”

Cowper the Poet.

La liberté de conscience est certainement la plus nécessaire de nos libertés; elle est la condition et la source de toutes les autres. C'est comme créatures pensantes que nous portons la responsabilité de notre avenir ; et quand on étouffe la force de la pensée ou qu'on en contrarie le développement, on nous ôte du même coup le droit et les moyens le disposer de notre volonté.

Jules Simon the Statesman.

THIS little book is the outgrowth of a discourse on Religious Liberty, which was delivered at the request of Rev. W. W. Everts, D.D., near the close of the year 1876, in Chicago. As a treatise it does not claim to be exhaustive, but it is hoped that it may prove suggestive. The veil of history which it only partially lifts, some stronger hand may be inspired to withdraw entirely, that the divine beauty of liberty may shine upon the world more clearly.

The following pages will be found to illustrate the truth, that the sublimest movements of history have not originated with the most highly educated or the most splendidly endowed. Leaders in great enterprises, are not always those whose gifts and standing appear to entitle them to the post of honor. Poor and comparatively illiterate men, who realize the need of radical reforms to save them and their families from utter degradation, are the more common instruments of their inauguration and accomplishment.

This is especially true of liberty. It is not only for the people, it has been of the people as well. The noble-born, the aristocratic, the men exalted by their position above the grosser evils of tyranny, have rarely been the most active leaders in warring against its cruel

assumptions. They have not felt the weight of the shackles, and therefore have not, save in some extraordinary cases, been among the first to strike away its rivets from the souls or bodies of the race.

It should not therefore be a matter of surprise to my readers, that the earliest advocates of soul-freedom were men and women of humble origin, and of humble attainments. Of vigorous virtue, of strong intellect, enlightened, it is true, by the teachings of the Bible and the Spirit, but unadorned by the polished graces of society, its earliest and most persistent friends went forth to the struggle. They realized, as others could not, the world's need of religious freedom; and, without counting the cost too nicely, they arrayed weakness against strength, poverty against wealth, lowliness against distinction; and they won—or are winning—because they arrayed right against wrong, God against man.

If this impression shall encourage the disciples of Christ, whatever their order or degree in the social scale, to realize that they should stand for something, should think great things, and attempt them too; if it shall impel them to seek the invincible exaltation of a mighty cause, an uncontrollable passion, which, like a tornado shall sweep away the brooding pestilence of stagnant conventionalism, or which, like the Heavenly inspiration of ancient prophets, shall thrill them with a strange fire, burning their lips to utter words that shall reach through remotest years,—their friend and brother, the author of this book, will not have written in vain.

THE GREAT CONFLICT.

LIBERTY is one of those words which challenge love and devotion. It needs no recommendation; for it belongs to the same category as order, as progress, as truth, as law. It is one of the ideas which appeal to human interests in all ages and everywhere, and which, in some sense or other, is accepted as a principle of vigorous, healthful life. Indeed, of all the words whereby in time past the genius, enterprise, and heroism of men have been inspired; of all words that have served as watch-cries and battle-signals along the lines of history, this has ever stood foremost, most regnant and potential. Even when its meaning has been less transparent than at present,—and, if Lieber is to be credited, it has yet a force and import not fully apprehended,—it has still possessed the magic qualities of a spell to start a spirit, and sway a people.

Whether inscribed on the banners of revolution or on the altars of martyrdom, whether written in

the constitutions of governments or in the covenants of churches, in both departments of society, the civil and religious, this word "liberty" has awakened a new consciousness of manhood ; and like the fiat of a god, penetrating the inert elements of nature, it has wrought convulsions and upheavals among the torpid masses of the nations, as marvellous as those which geology records. In the name of liberty, eloquence has pronounced its grandest orations ; in the name of liberty, statesmanship has enacted its wisest and most enduring statutes ; in the name of liberty, poetry has sung its sweetest and most plaintive measures ; in the name of liberty, piety has borne its heaviest burdens, and breathed its divinest prayers. In this sacred name, Milton, Hampden, Locke, Taylor, Williams, Otis, Henry, and others too numerous to mention but too glorious to be forgotten, thought, wrought, and suffered in their day ; and in this name millions of the unknown, such as the yeomen of England and America, the peasants of Switzerland, and the bourgeoisie of France, forsaking their business, their property, their friends, went forth with armor buckled on by sister, or falchion girded to the side by wife, from the home to the bivouac, from the sweet amenities of life to the rude shock of arms, and oftentimes to the damp of the dungeon, the terror of the scaffold, or the horror of the stake.

To the rise and progress, the struggles and triumphs of liberty, in the sublimest sphere of human thought and action, and to the memory of the lowly men who shed their blood

“ In confirmation of the noblest claim, —
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies,” —

these humble pages are devoted.

Religious liberty has been frequently defined. Harrington, in his *Political Aphorisms* (*pp.* 23, 24), declares that it is realized “where a man, according to the dictates of his own conscience, may have the free exercise of his religion, without impediment to his preferment or employment in the state.” Archbishop Whately, in referring to the subject, says, “We merely maintain that a man has a right, a civil right, to worship God according to his own conscience, without suffering any hardships at the hands of his neighbors for so doing.” An American writer has put it, and that too quite comprehensively, in these words: “Soul-freedom is the freedom to think and act in religious matters without human dictation or control.” And Lieber, in his excellent treatise on *Self-Government* (*p.* 97), expresses the conviction that this blessing “ought to be called more properly the liberty of worship; for,” as he adds in a foot-

note, "conscience lies beyond the reach of government. 'Thoughts are free,' is an old German saying. The same must be said of feelings and conscience. That which government, even the most despotic, can alone interfere with, is the profession of religion, worship, and church government."

While all such definitions — and they could be multiplied — have a certain value, yet that which they seek to analyze and describe is too varied in its phases, too diverse in its operations, and too wide-reaching in its consequences, for it to be adequately compassed by them. The practical use they are fitted to serve, and for which I have introduced them here, is rudely and crudely to give rough shape and shadowy outline to the nature and magnitude of the grand idea to be studied, whose fair proportions and moral splendor can only be discovered by tracing its rise and development in history.

The progress of religious liberty, both as a conception and a realization, is doubtless due to manifold agencies; but I am persuaded that to none other is it more indebted than to the Baptists of Europe and America. Indeed, I am satisfied that they may honestly claim to have occupied the front rank, and possibly the very foremost position in the rank, of those martyr-souls who toiled and suffered for the triumph of this principle. Nor has this claim been

regarded as altogether worthless by many outside of their communion. It has been recognized by candid scholars, whose opinions upon such subjects are of the greatest weight and value.

Bossuet, at the close of the seventeenth century, declared that he knew only two bodies who denied the right of the civil magistrate to punish religious error, and they were the Socinians and the Anabaptists. With evident reluctance, Lecky, the rationalist, reproduces this testimony, seeking to break its force in a foot-note, where he identifies the Anabaptists with the fanatical portion of the men of Münster. The celebrated John Locke was more ingenuous; for, when Lord Chancellor King sought to crown him as the author of religious freedom, he proclaimed in the face of all England that "the Baptists were the first and only propounders of absolute liberty,—just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty." The German philosopher Gervinus, in his *Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century*, does not hesitate, when discussing the peculiar doctrines set forth by Roger Williams, to say, "Here in a little state the fundamental principles of political and ecclesiastical liberty practically prevailed before they were even taught in any of the schools of philosophy in Europe." And Judge Story thus refers to this early Baptist settlement: "In the code of laws established by them in Rhode

Island, we read, for the first time since Christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, the declaration that conscience should be free, and men should not be punished for worshipping God in the way they were persuaded he requires."

The devotion of this denomination of Christians to this glorious doctrine has been set forth recently, in no measured terms, by Herbert S. Skeats, who in his *History of the Free Churches of England* (*p.* 24), testifies: "It is the singular and distinguished honor of the Baptists, to have repudiated from their earliest history all coercive power over the consciences and the actions of men with reference to religion. No sentence is to be found in all their writings inconsistent with these principles of Christian liberty and willingness which are now equally dear to all the free Congregational Churches of England. They were the proto-evangelists of the voluntary principle." And in a foot-note he adds, "The author of this is not connected with the Baptist denomination, and has therefore, perhaps, greater pleasure in bearing this testimony to undoubted historical fact." To all of which our national annalist, Bancroft, sets his seal in the now familiar words, "Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was, from the first, the trophy of the Baptists."

To not a few, doubtless, these concessions in the

form of tributes will prove a genuine surprise, and may appear altogether inexplicable, as they have never dreamed of this sect sustaining a distinctive and conspicuous relation to any world-wide movement involving, as this does, the greatest breadth and liberality of judgment. No wonder they should be perplexed by these testimonies; for have they not been taught on every side that Baptists are the most intolerant and bigoted of all the Lord's followers? have they not heard repeatedly that they are close-communists, exclusionists, fertile only in the fruits of uncharitableness, disfellowshipping from Christianity every disciple who differs from them even on minutest points of ceremony? Nay, have they not read in newspapers, over and over again, mysterious hints and dark insinuations concerning "Star Chambers," "Courts of High Commission," and of "*Unholy Inquisitions*," which these Baptists have established in unknown regions, where proscription runs riot, to the ecclesiastical detriment and social annoyance of the more liberal-minded of their own order?

Beyond question, such are the representations very frequently made by pulpit and press, regarding the spirit governing this influential body of disciples. It is, therefore, no more than natural, that some of my readers should be perplexed by the admissions quoted from the writings of distinguished parties on

the other side. Not looking for such counter statements, they must find it difficult to reconcile them with the received impressions, and the more widely circulated charges.

Prejudice is not easily overcome. It is a poison-root of sturdy growth, and few men possess the moral nerve to undertake its destruction. They greedily drink in rumors injurious to those from whom they differ, but will hardly take any pains to ascertain their justness, especially if, as in this case, investigation leads them from the beaten paths of information. The ordinary histories within the reach of every man, are measurably silent on such themes. Their pages make but slight allusion to the Baptists, and far less to their alleged devotion to the sacred cause of liberty. The stately Gibbon never condescends to speak of them; the majestic volumes of Hume and Macaulay are equally indifferent to their claims; and even the most popular ecclesiastical writers, as D'Aubigné, refer to them in the meagrest terms conceivable. This is to be regretted, but it is not very extraordinary. Church and national historians, after all, are but men; and, while they may not yield to extreme partisanship, they are strongly tempted to color their narrative, to conveniently omit important facts, and to deal exclusively with events most palatable to their readers. They are aware that, the public taste craves the

record of blood-stained banners, the achievements of barbaric princes, the splendors of monarchs, and the ambitions of priests, in preference to the gloomy annals of humble confessors, who toiled, suffered, and died for an idea. They consequently cater to the reigning appetite, and, in providing what will prove attractive to their readers, magnify the glaring and meretricious at the expense of the unobtrusive and the genuine. The poet has recognized this tendency: writing of the martyrs he says, —

“ With their names

No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.”

They who would rise superior to prejudice, who would not willingly calumniate their fellow-Christians, nor accept without sufficient evidence the eulogies which mere generousness may have pronounced, must be prepared to interrogate authorities other than the authors of popular histories, must make proper allowances for the bitterness of enemies, and must diligently acquaint themselves with the prevailing sentiments of those regarding whose position they would form a candid and honest judgment.

For such inquirers, especially, have these pages been prepared. That the failure to honor the ancestors of a worthy brotherhood may in some degree be remedied, that the misapprehensions of contemporaries concerning their descendants may be rectified, and that the enthusiasm of all in behalf of soul-emancipation may be informed and intensified, — the author of this work invites his readers to consider

THE RELATION OF BAPTISTS TO THE RISE AND
PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The principle of coercion in the affairs of the soul, was very generally recognized with approval from the time that the professed Christian Church obtained civil power under Constantine. Before this period, the ministers of Christ, as a rule, were in favor of absolute and complete toleration. This was the case with Tertullian during the Pagan persecution, and with Hilary of Poitiers during the Arian. Whitby has given a full statement of passages from the fathers in support of the liberal view, mentioning one conspicuous instance of faithfulness to its teachings, which deserves to be noted here.

Lactantius, in the reign of Constantine, asserted the iniquity of persecution quite as strongly as any previous writer; this was very creditable to him, as he was tutor to the son of the emperor, and, con-

sequently, peculiarly tempted to overlook the abuse of regal power. In vain, however, did the mildness of his spirit plead for freedom of conscience; his imperial master, ever more Pagan than Christian, sought to crush out all opinions contrary to those held by the dominant religious party. He condemned to the flames any Jew who threw stones at a Christian convert, and rendered it a penal offence for one of the latter class to become a Jew. Against the Arian and Donatist heretics his measures were equally unscrupulous and energetic. Their assemblies were forbidden, their churches were destroyed, their bishops banished, and their writings condemned to the flames. From this beginning, the coercive policy attained complete ascendancy in the councils of that ecclesiastical order which gradually developed into the Papacy, and, in the coming centuries, shed more innocent blood than flowed during the Ten Persecutions waged by the Paganism it supplanted.

It is impossible now to form a complete conception of the multitude of its victims, and no powers of imagination can ever fully realize their sufferings. Llorente, at one time secretary to the Inquisition, and, because of his access to all the secret papers of that tribunal, the highest authority on the subject, assures us, that by the Spanish branch alone more than 31,000 persons were burnt, and more than 290,000 condemned to punishments less severe than

death. The number of those who were slain in the Netherlands for their religion, in the reign of Charles V., has been estimated by a very high authority at 50,000; Grotius says 100,000. Motley, in his *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, writes, "Upon the 15th of February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. From this universal doom, only a few persons especially named were excepted. A proclamation of the king, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the Inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into immediate execution. . . . Three millions of people—men, women, and children—were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines." And these are but memorable instances, and of these only a few, which do not include the innumerable and less conspicuous executions that have taken place wherever this sum of all abominations, Ultramontaniam, has reigned supreme in the councils of the State.

Yet in our times, the author of these atrocities—atrocities perpetrated with most solemn deliberation—has been claimed as the champion of spiritual freedom, to whom the world is indebted for its conservation and triumph.

I confess, that I have no words whereby fitly to characterize this unparalleled, and unwarranted assumption. Not only is it opposed to the history of

this body, but it is utterly at variance with the enunciations of more than one of its infallible heads. Pope Gregory XVI., in his Encyclical letter of 1832, denounces as “a most pestilent error, as the ravings of delirium, the opinion that for every one whatever is to be claimed and defended the liberty of conscience.” In 1864 Pius IX. issued his Encyclical letter and famous Syllabus, in the former of which he says: “That liberty of conscience and of worship is the right of every man,” is an erroneous opinion, “most pernicious to the Catholic Church and to the salvation of souls;” and in Article XXIV. of the latter document, the denial to the Church of authority to avail herself of any force, or of any direct or indirect temporal power to extend her faith is similarly denounced.

That these declarations are not exceptional exhibitions of narrowness and intolerance, *The New York Tablet*, a prominent Catholic organ, gives frequent and striking proof. From many statements which have appeared in its columns, I select the following from one of its November issues (1876), clearly indicating that the spirit of the popes is very generally the spirit of their people:—

“The Church [of Rome] proclaims trumpet-tongued through the lands that belief in what she teaches is a duty obligatory on every human being who hears it, and that not to believe it is *a capital*

crime, bringing down on the unbeliever the eternal wrath of God. . . .

“The Church is charged with intolerance because she asserts that what *she* teaches is not at all a matter of opinion; that *no one is permitted* to have any opinion about it; that what she teaches is the truth once delivered to the saints, of which she has been the divinely informed depositary ever since Christ went up to heaven; that what it was then it is now; that no one, from the pope to the humblest peasant, is permitted to question it or to cavil; that all are bound, under pain of *terrific penalties*, to receive exactly what she teaches as to obligatory dogma, and nothing else; and that whoever, of set purpose and wilfully, refuses to believe it, incurs the punishment of hell.”

Yet, in the face of such utterances as these, Archbishop Hughes had the audacity to represent the Papacy as enamoured of religious liberty, and, in the person of Lord Baltimore, to have been the first to establish it upon this continent. Many zealous Catholics have been carried away by this assumption, and not a few thoughtless Protestants have been misled by it. Now, I am far from desiring to rob the Romish Church of any honors she may have won in this glorious enterprise, neither would I deal unjustly with the memory of Lord Baltimore; but I am satisfied that neither one nor the other of these

parties ever did what the learned archbishop claimed. Doubtless the founder of Maryland was a nobleman of liberal tendencies, as others of his communion have been ; but he neither enunciated nor established the true doctrine of soul-liberty.

This can very readily be made out by examining the facts in the case. Lord Baltimore wished to provide a refuge in America for persecuted Romanists ; but as no charter could be obtained from an Episcopal home government, which contemplated the exclusion of Protestants, the only available method by which his desire could be realized was by the adoption of a clause assuring toleration to all Christians. This clause was incorporated in the charter ; but it meant only toleration, and nothing broader. It provided that “blasphemy against God, denying our Saviour Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, or denying the holy Trinity, or the Godhead of the three persons,” should be punished “with death, and confiscation of lands and goods to the Lord Proprietary.” Under this law persons using any reproachful word or speech concerning “the blessed Virgin, or the holy apostles or evangelists, were to be fined, whipped, or imprisoned, according to the frequency and malignancy of the offence.”

Of course, these provisions afforded no protection to Unitarians or infidels. These classes of thinkers on religious subjects were forbidden to harbor their

theories, and the expression of them was at their peril. The so-called orthodox were fostered: they could in safety proclaim their convictions; but the civil authorities muzzled like mad dogs those who differed from them, and made honest doubt a crime before the law. This is not liberty; this is not that sacred right which every manly nature feels is his inalienably. This is but meagre, narrow toleration; and its seeming graciousness is disfigured by the evident selfishness from which it sprang. Sifted down to its underlying motive, it was merely a Catholic expedient to secure for itself a place of safety within the pale of a Protestant government; it contemplated only the absolute freedom of Catholic worshippers, not that of the race at large.

In contrast with this, how singularly liberal does the organic law of Rhode Island appear upon this subject! Thirteen years before the Maryland toleration clause became a law, the charter of this New England colony provided "that no person within the said colony at any time hereafter shall be in any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any difference of opinion in matters of religion; but that all and every person and persons, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their judgment and consciences in matters of religious concernment."

If this is the true conception of soul-liberty, — and in our day every American citizen will admit that it is, — then that which Lord Baltimore proclaimed was something lower, if not something entirely different. Still we are prepared to recognize and commend the measure of liberality which the Maryland statesman displayed; and this is what his own church has never done, save in countries like ours, where her persecuting proclivities are at the same time restrained by the law, and condemned by an overwhelming majority of citizens.

It is not uncommon, when Papal intolerance is exposed, for recrimination to advance to the rescue. “If we have believed in and practiced coercion in matters of conscience,” its upholders exclaim, “we have not been alone; for the Protestant party has held most strenuously the same principle, and has acted upon it in many cruel ways.” The accusation is not without foundation; for, as a learned antiquarian writer has said, “There is not a confession of faith, nor a creed framed by any of the Reformers, which does not give to the magistrate coercive power in religion.” — Underhill, “*Struggles and Triumphs*,” p. 87. Referring to these mighty men, *The Edinburgh Review* for September, 1816, vol. xxvii., declares that they did not maintain the right of private judgment. The editor cites the cases of Servetus in Geneva, and Joan

Bocher in England, as illustrations of his allegation. He also reminds us that by act of parliament, 1560, in Scotland, those who attended mass were condemned to banishment or death; and that when Maitland of Lethington, in 1564, who was then secretary of state, with several noblemen invited the most distinguished foreign divines to a conference on Queen Mary's popish practices, John Knox expressed the opinion that the Lord's people should put to death all such idolaters.

I have no pleasure in recalling these facts; but it is not only due the Catholics that the historic accuracy of their charge be admitted: it is also due the Baptists, that it be distinctly shown that with the Protestant leaders the doctrine of soul-liberty did not originate. The Reformation was but the dawning of a better day. Through its clouds only the morning of freedom faintly broke, and many weary years elapsed before it dispersed the mists of tyranny which veiled the race in sombre gloom. It professed principles—such as the supremacy of Scripture and the right of judgment—which in the course of time, when their logical bearing was apprehended, enlisted its followers in support of religious liberty, and constrained them to sacrifice ease, property, and life for its establishment. Ultimately they made common cause with the Baptists in waging determined warfare against every phase of spiritual

tyranny ; and, having shared with them in the bloody cost, they now rejoice with them in the victory as far as it has been won. It is not for me to ignore their services, or detract from their value, and I have no idea of doing either ; but at a time when the descendants of the Reformers, Puritans, and Pilgrims are serenely claiming for their ancestors nearly all the credit which attaches to the origin and success of this movement, I may be excused for showing that they claim far more than can be proved.

By consulting Guizot's *History of Civilization* (*vol. i. pp. 262, 263*), it will be seen that there is reliable and impartial authority for this statement of the case. From his pages, for the benefit of reader, the following extracts are made :—

“The emancipation of the human mind, in the course of the Reformation, was a fact rather than a principle, a result rather than an intention. The Reformation, I believe, has in this respect performed more than it undertook, — more, probably, than it desired. Contrary to what has happened in many other revolutions, the effects of which have not come up to their design, the consequences of the Reformation have gone beyond the object it had in view. It is greater, considered as an event, than as a system. It has never completely known all that it has done ; nor, if it had, would it have completely avowed it.

“What are the reproaches constantly applied to the Reformation by its enemies? which of its results are thrown in its face, as it were, as unanswerable?”

“The two principal reproaches are, first, the multiplicity of sects, the excessive license of thought, the destruction of all spiritual authority, and the entire dissolution of religious society; secondly, tyranny and persecution. ‘You provoke licentiousness,’ it has been said to the reformers: ‘you produced it; and, after having been the cause of it, you wish to restrain and repress it. And how do you repress it? By the most harsh and violent means. You take upon yourselves, too, to punish heresy, and that by virtue of an illegitimate authority.’”

“If we take a review of all the principal charges which have been made against the Reformation, we shall find, if we set aside all questions purely doctrinal, that the above are the two fundamental reproaches to which they may all be reduced.

“These charges gave great embarrassment to the reform party. When they were taxed with the multiplicity of their sects, instead of advocating the freedom of religious opinion, and maintaining the right of every sect to entire toleration, they denounced sectarianism, lamented it, and endeavored to find excuses for its existence. Were they accused of persecution? They were troubled to defend themselves: they used the plea of necessity; they

had, they said, the right to repress and punish error, because they were in possession of the truth. Their articles of belief, they contended, and their institutions, were the only legitimate ones; and, if the Church of Rome had not the right to punish the reformed party, it was because she was in the wrong and they in the right.

“And when the charge of persecution was applied to the ruling party in the Reformation, not by its enemies, but by its own offspring; when the sects denounced by that party said, ‘We are doing just what you did: we separate ourselves from you just as you separated yourselves from the Church of Rome,’—this ruling party were still more at a loss to find an answer; and frequently the only answer they had to give was an increase of severity.

“The truth is, that, while laboring for the destruction of absolute power in the spiritual order, the religious revolution of the sixteenth century was not aware of the true principles of intellectual liberty. It emancipated the human mind, and yet pretended still to govern it by laws. In point of *fact* it produced the prevalence of free inquiry: in point of *principle* it believed that it was substituting a legitimate for an illegitimate power. It had not looked up to the primary motive, nor down to the ultimate consequences, of its own work. It thus fell into a double error. On the one side it did not know or

respect all the rights of human thought : at the very moment that it was demanding these rights for itself, it was violating them towards others. On the other side it was unable to estimate the rights of authority in matters of reason."

Prof. Goldwin Smith has penned some admirable passages on this subject (*Modern History*, vol. i. p. 266), which confirm the representations of M. Guizot ; and a few specific illustrations will remove all doubt from the candid mind as to the historic accuracy of both writers.

Martin Luther seems to have had no just notions of the relations of civil government to religion. He held that magistrates should maintain order by the regulation even of the externals of worship ; and to this day his followers maintain the same pernicious doctrine. In Germany there is still a grand court charged with the judicial management of all the ecclesiastical affairs of the empire. A letter from Luther to Menius and Myconius, 1530, contains these words : "I am pleased that you intend to publish a book against the Anabaptists as soon as possible. Since they are not only blasphemous but also seditious men, let the sword exercise its rights over them ; for this is the will of God, that he shall have judgment who resisteth the power." — Dr. Sears's *Life of Luther*.

The reformation in Switzerland was contemporaneous with, but independent of, the movement in Germany. Its great leader, Zwingli, invoked the authority of the State in behalf of the Church. The law of Zurich (1530) decrees death to Baptists; and the gentle Melancthon, in a letter to the Diet of Hamburg (1537), advocated the same proscriptive policy.

Among those who have acquired unenviable distinction for spiritual despotism, none is more conspicuous in history than Calvin. "Godly princes," he wrote, "may lawfully issue edicts for compelling obstinate and rebellious persons to worship the true God, and to maintain the unity of the faith." With his consent, Michael Servetus was executed; for Calvin had declared regarding him, "If he comes to Geneva, and my authority avails any thing, I will never suffer him to go away alive." — *Letters*, vol. ii. 19. Verily, as Dr. Tulloch has said, "It was a hard and bad world that needed Calvin for a reformer."

Presbyterianism was not at first less intolerant than its founder. The Edinburgh Convention, which framed the articles of Church Polity, declared certain ecclesiastical offenders worthy of death. They proclaimed that the observance of certain feasts and fasts, Christmas, Epiphany, &c., "ought not to escape the punishment of the civil magistrate." Well might Milton utter his famous sar-

casm in the face of such tyranny, "New presbyter is but old priest writ large;" well might it be repeated again and again when such a man as Baxter could exclaim, "I abhor unlimited liberty and toleration of all," and when so godly a divine as Owen, in his essay appended to a sermon preached before Parliament, 1646, could express the opinion that "toleration would prove exceedingly pernicious to all sorts of men."

These sentiments prevailed in the Westminster Assembly; and, accordingly, the Confession of Faith contained an explicit avowal of the duty of the civil magistrate to suppress heresy. Moreover, the Presbyterians constantly labored to thwart the measures of Cromwell in the direction of greater liberty of conscience. They desired that those only should be tolerated who accepted the fundamentals of Christianity; and they drew up such a list of these fundamentals, that nearly every sect but themselves was amenable to the searching discipline they proposed. A full description of them is given in Neal's History of the Puritans, where it will be seen that they condemned Popish, Arminian, Antinomian, Baptist, and Quaker doctrines.

Of the Church of England, with "her Popish liturgy and Genevan creed," little need be said. She originated by law in 1527; and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was appointed her

supreme tribunal, by whom all questions relating to the true and legal construction of doctrines and formularies must finally be judged. Such an establishment could not but abound in injustice and persecution. The statute-books of England have been sadly burdened with tyrannical decrees, penal codes, conventicle acts, corporation acts, test acts, five-mile acts; and the people have suffered from their enforcement at the hands of Star Chambers, and Courts of High Commission. The bosom of this English politico-ecclesiastical institution has nourished such monsters as Laud, who was promoted step by step in episcopal office, till in 1633 he was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, — made the primate and the representative man of the hierarchy. To such men, liberty could only be an unknown quality; and from them, every concession towards its establishment could only be won by blood and tears.

Hallam says, the Toleration Act of William and Mary, which was simply the just recognition of the right of public worship beyond the pale of the State Church, was passed, “not without murmurs of bigoted churchmen.” And, every victory since then achieved in England, has been won in the face of clerical opposition. The emancipation of the Catholics from political disabilities on account of their religious views, the enfranchisement of the Jews, as well as the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church

in Ireland, have only been effected by the persistent efforts of those who had neither part nor lot in the hierarchy. Even, the recent ridiculous controversies on what is known as the Burial Bill, and on the right of Dissenting ministers to be called by the honorary title of "Reverend," and to have it inscribed upon their humble tombstones, show how difficult it is to charm to sleep the spirit of intolerance in the bosoms of the British clergy. Deprived of power to inflict the halter or the fagot, persecution still breathes venom from their lips, and indirectly tries to blast what it cannot openly destroy.

The Independents and the Congregationalists have certainly, in many respects, a fairer record than the English Church; but they are not entitled to the encomium of Lord King, that with them originated the true notion of religious liberty. We who inhabit these shores, and who are indebted to them for very many of the blessings we enjoy to-day, have fallen into the amiable habit of regarding Pilgrims and Puritans as fleeing from Europe to this wilderness, for the purpose of securing to all men absolute freedom of conscience. Statements of this kind have found their way into speeches delivered on Forefathers' Day, into sermons and poetry, where sentiment is often more popular than fact, until the people very generally believe them. There never was, however, an impression more erroneous. These

men, whom we justly venerate for their many noble virtues, were far from sympathizing with a doctrine, which, recognizing the accountability of the soul to God, would have every man left free of earthly magistrates in shaping his religious course.

In proof of this statement, permit me to quote a passage from the writings of Mr. John Robinson, the father of the band of exiles, who for their religion first sought refuge in Holland, and afterwards in America. He declared that the civil magistrate "may alter, devise, or establish nothing in religion otherwise than Christ hath appointed;" but he may use "his lawful power lawfully for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom and laws. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the Church of Christ, foretells that kings shall be her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers; which, if they meddle not with her, how can they be?" Lecky, while making a special plea for the English Independents, admits that their theory of toleration, by which they expressed their sympathy with Cromwell's views, stopped short of Popery and Prelacy; that is, it excluded Romanism and Episcopacy.—*Rationalism in Europe*, p. 78, vol. ii. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that it originated mainly in their anxiety to secure for themselves a standing of safety before the law. That they were actuated by no intelligent and broad desire to establish the right of every

man, whether Christian or Infidel, Protestant or Papist, Jew or Turk, to enjoy, unmolested by the civil authorities, his convictions on the subject of religion, is abundantly proved by the whole tenor of their history in America.

The fathers of New England did not cross the stormy Atlantic to found a state on fundamental principles, but to obtain for themselves and children a free field for their own ideas of church reform. They were good men; better men never lived: the sifted seed were they, taken from the Old World wherewith to plant the New. But they were the product of the sixteenth century, not the nineteenth. They were intense believers; and they believed in nothing more intensely than the union of the Church with the State.

The Rev. John Norton, in the Election Sermon of 1661, said that they came to live in this wilderness "under the order of the gospel; that our polity may be a gospel polity, and may be complete according to the Scriptures, answering fully the word of God." Higginson of Salem in his Election Discourse, 1663, stated the point thus fully: "It concerneth New England always to remember that they are originally a plantation religious, not a plantation of trade. The profession of the purity of doctrine, worship, and discipline is written upon her forehead." In 1677 Rev. Increase Mather, and in 1783 Pres. Stiles of

Yale College, proclaimed substantially the same sentiments as distinguishing the primitive settlers of New England. In the spring of 1631, the first year after the founding of Boston, the General Court "ordered and agreed, that, for the time to come, no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic but such as are members of some of the churches within the limits of the same." It was Dudley, the second governor of Massachusetts, successor of the noble Winthrop, who wrote the well-known lines, as execrable in poetry as in sentiment:—

"Let men of God in courts and churches watch
O'er such as do a toleration hatch."

In 1644 the General Court enacted: "If any Christian shall openly condemn the baptism of infants, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the administration of the ordinance, . . . continuing obstinate therein, he shall be sentenced to banishment." Says the Cambridge Platform of 1649, "If any church, one or more, shall grow schismatical, rending itself from the communion of other churches, . . . in such case a magistrate is to put forth his coercive power as the matter shall require." And Cotton Mather, who did more than any other man to shape the ecclesiastical polity of Massachusetts, deliberately expressed the view, that "it cannot be truly said that the Lord Jesus never

appointed the civil sword for a remedy in such cases, for he did expressly appoint it in the Old Testament; nor did he abrogate it in the New Testament." Having quoted Deut. xiii. 19, he proceeds, "The reason is moral, therefore of perpetual equity, to put to death the apostate, seducing idolater, or heretic, who seeketh to thrust away the people from the Lord their God." — *Answer to Williams*: see his *Bloody Tenet*. Said Rev. James Noyes of Newbury (1661), "Magistrates have a just power to use the sword in their hands against any persons, for the good of the Church and the glory of Christ's kingdom." Yea, the great John Cotton declared, that "it was toleration that made the world anti-Christian, and that the Church never took hurt by the punishment of heretics."

Dr. George E. Ellis has stated (*Lowell Lectures by Members of Massachusetts Historical Society*, p. 84), with admirable precision, the real position of the fathers of New England upon this subject. Referring to liberty of conscience, he says, "Our fathers were fully informed as to what it was, what it meant; and they were familiar with such results as it wrought in their day. They knew it well, and what must come of it; and they did not like it: rather they feared and hated it. They did not mean to live where it was indulged; and, in the full exercise of their intelligence and prudence, they

resolved not to tolerate it among them." *The North American Review*, in a recent favorable notice of "Dexter's Roger Williams," not only agrees with Dr. Ellis, and with all the testimony previously adduced, but attempts a justification of Puritan proscriptiveness, which, though I regard it as bad mending of a bad cause, I give to my readers, that they may judge for themselves the soundness of the plea put forth in its defence : —

“The Puritans have been blamed because people have not stopped to consider their real aims and the conditions of their existence, because they have not tried to put themselves in their place. The Puritans acquired their land not merely by royal patent, but by the abandonment of home, of civilization, and of every comfort. In a place so dearly bought, they had an inalienable right to do as they pleased ; and it pleased them to try a great political experiment. They had entered into the land, and possessed it ; and there in the wilderness they founded a Puritan state, the asylum for men of their race and religion. In their new country it further pleased them to make Church and State one ; and they believed that whoever touched one touched the other, and therefore they defended both with all their strength. They did not come to the barren shores of Massachusetts Bay to obtain for every papist, fanatic, and

heretic, freedom to worship God after his fashion : they sought freedom to worship God after their own fashion. Whoever interfered with them, or threatened the existence of their government by attacks on Church or State, whether it was Charles the First or Roger Williams, they resisted to the uttermost ; and, if they had the power, punished the assailant by exile and sometimes by death. By every law of self-preservation, by every law of common sense and common prudence, and with all justice in so doing, they acted strongly and well. No doubt their judgment often erred, for they were human and fallible. No doubt they were often harsh and narrow-minded if tried by our standards, or by the standards of such contemporaries as Francis Bacon or John Selden. Yet it is folly and weakness to make apologies for them, for they need none. The Puritans of Massachusetts acted according to their best lights ; and they acted like wise, brave men. They built up a strong, enduring state, the cornerstone of a great nation. All these men need is the exact and severe justice of history ; and sooner or later the judgment of history must become the verdict of mankind."

The practice of these men was thoroughly consistent with their principles. Their characters were too ruggedly sincere, their conscience too morbidly

sensitive, for them to hesitate one moment in maintaining at every cost their honest convictions. Hence it was, that the Baptists, who had been ground beneath the heel of spiritual tyranny in the Old World, found waiting them in the New, whither they had fled for refuge, nothing but fines, imprisonments, scourgings, confiscations, and banishments. Many scenes occurred in the early history of the colonies, which were stained with injustice, cruelty, and blood. Roger Williams was driven from his home into the wilderness, from the savageness of Christians to the Christianity of savages; Obadiah Holmes was stripped of his clothes, and in Boston was publicly whipped, a three-corded scourge dashing the gore from his quivering flesh; while John Hazel and John Spur, for words of sympathy spoken to the sufferer, were arrested, fined forty shillings, and imprisoned, — and all because they would not conform to the Standing Order.

From 1723 to 1733, twenty-eight Baptists were imprisoned at Bristol; and in the same century, according to Winthrop's journal, a poor man by the name of Painter was barbarously flogged like a common felon, because he refused to bring his child to be sprinkled. William Clark, for the same offence in 1651, was sentenced to pay twenty pounds, or be whipped; while Pres. Dunster, the learned chief of Harvard College, was fined and

driven from his office because he held to and expressed Baptist sentiments. In 1665 the leading members of this denomination in Charlestown, Mass., were brought before the Court, and were disfranchised; and in 1680 the doors of the First Baptist Church at Boston were nailed up by the marshal, and services prohibited.

But these are only a few instances of the widespread calamities, which were inflicted upon our sires for conscience' sake. No language can reproduce the gloom which enshrouded them, nor the malignant intolerance which sought to exterminate them. They ate their bread in fear; in the morning they wished it were evening, and in the evening they wished it were morning. Robbed, beaten, cursed, despised, driven from their homes, separated from their families, treated as the offscouring of the earth, — what was left them, but to appeal to that God, of whom it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord”? — assured that He at least would “avenge His own elect, though he bear long with them.”

They needed indeed to look to Him, and to Him alone; for nowhere on this broad continent, where the descendants of the Reformation held sway, could they find arm to help or heart to sympathize. If we turn our sickened eyes from New England, it is only to sicken them more terribly by similar

events in Virginia. When it is remembered that the English Church was established by law in that colony, the sad condition of dissenters can easily be imagined. The intolerant spirit which had made her infamous in the Old World, by an unhappy species of transmigration appeared in the New. Each person staying away from her services was fined fifty pounds of tobacco, and two thousand pounds of the same article for refusing to have an infant christened. Citizens were disfranchised and banished, even members of the House of Burgesses were expelled from their seats, on account of their religious opinions. It is impossible, as it is unnecessary, to detail the wrongs endured by those who could not subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles.

Time itself would fail me to tell of the Wallers, the Craigs, Childs, Webbers, Weatherfords, Herndons, Wares, Pitmans, who "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment;" who "being destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth, not accepting deliverance."

Do you ask for what offence, for what crime against the majesty of law and the well-being of humanity, these humble men were shamed and punished; held forth, as it were, a spectacle of ignominy to the universe? Do you ask? Then follow me through a century of years, and in that

Virginia Court-House, receive an answer from no less a witness than Patrick Henry.

Three ministers are standing there before the bar of justice, indicted as disturbers of the peace. A crowd of people throng the room, not to hear alone the words of the prosecuting attorney, but to witness the action of the great patriot under circumstances so solemn and impressive. Henry takes the indictment from the officer of the law, and begins a plea which for effective oratory has never been surpassed. I will not trust my poor unpracticed pen to reproduce his words; certainly, I could not rekindle the fire with which they were charged; but the thrice-reiterated climax of his sublime appeal reveals the terrible offence of these poor Baptist preachers, and of the entire fraternity North and South, who agreed with them in doctrine, and shared with them in tribulation: they were guilty of no less a crime than that "of preaching the gospel of the Son of God." No wonder, after such a declaration, that Henry, pausing amidst the most profound silence, should wave the indictment thrice round his head, and exclaim, "GREAT GOD!"

Moved by a similar impulse, as I contemplate this injustice and bigotry, I cannot refrain from expressing my indignation in the solemn cry of the enlightened advocate, "GREAT GOD!" For preaching the word of life, for conscientiously

proclaiming what Heaven had commanded them to speak, these rugged, faithful men were hounded, harried, and crushed by those who had fled with them from despotic Europe to the wilds of America that they might worship their Creator according to their conceptions of his mighty will: GREAT GOD!

Stranger than these facts by far are the specious pleas, which have been put forth by some of the descendants of these intolerant churchmen and puritans to clear their memory, in this age of liberty, of the foul blot that rests upon it. I doubt not that these undertakings have been inspired by veneration for the virtues, which, unquestionably, their ancestors possessed, as well as by an apprehension that the denominations of which they were members may incur present reproach, unless it can be shown that their principles and deeds were justifiable. Such motives are honorable enough, if honorably pursued; but they cannot excuse the publication of arguments in defence of Congregationalist or Churchman, whose historical inaccuracies can only be equalled by their historical perversions.

No body of men can fairly be held responsible for the sentiments of their forefathers. Time works many changes; and it may come to pass, that the most proscriptive party in the course of years may mellow into the most tolerant. On the other hand, the offspring of the most devoted champions of

religious freedom may shrink and narrow into the most bigoted of bigots. The son of the old Puritan may be more charitable than the son of the old Baptist. The justice of this thought being very generally recognized, there exists no real necessity for other than the most candid treatment of the errors and failures of those from whom we sprang.

Nor should it be forgotten, that most likely, in the worst ages of oppression, very many persons associated with the persecuting church may have condemned her course, and have sympathized with those who suffered for the sake of conscience. The rank and file of any religious party very rarely rise or sink to the level of its leaders. Doubtless among the early settlers in New England, there were not a few loving natures who could weep for the afflictions of their Baptist brethren; who, could they only have seen their way through the logical defences of spiritual despotism, and have felt themselves safe from all its cruelties, would gladly have succored the distressed ones, whose crime lay in presuming to differ from their rulers. These tender but timid and perplexed souls may have had fair visions of a happier era, may have prayed for its dawning, and secretly may have comforted the stricken and homeless victims of the "zealot's rage." All this is more than probable; and I believe it very thoroughly, because the Revolu-

tionary period of our history brought to light an overwhelming sentiment in favor of absolute religious liberty, which must have been maturing and spreading in darker times. That it should not have been made effective by those who cherished it at an earlier period, may fairly be a cause of regret to their descendants; but they should not assume that its existence is now unrecognized, or that there is in any quarter a purpose to charge the tyranny of the comparatively few indiscriminately upon all, and that, in consequence, an imperative obligation rests upon them to vindicate their ancestors by attempting to prove that the persecutors among them were not persecutors, that their cruelties were not cruelties, that their decrees of banishment did not mean banishment, and that other feelings than intolerance dictated their narrow policy.

These reflections have been suggested by the careful study of various works, the principal aim of which appears to be the reversal of that judgment which posterity has pronounced on those who in New England and Virginia exalted the sword of the civil magistrate above the authority of conscience. Among these, the most important, as being the most recent and comprehensive, is the "Monograph" by Rev. Henry Martyn Dexter, D.D., which deals with "Roger Williams and his Banishment." As the Episcopal historian, Dr. Hawks, defends the Vir-

ginia authorities, Dr. Dexter, following in the footsteps of Dr. Palfrey, attempts in his book to palliate the conduct of the Massachusetts Court in regard to Roger Williams. This somewhat remarkable effort has interested not a few persons in our country, and has been both favorably and unfavorably reviewed. For my own part, I admire the "Monograph" in many respects; but I cannot admit that as a whole the performance is equal to the expectation it excites. As it illustrates the insufficiency of all pleas in extenuation of Puritan proscriptiveness, I may be permitted to express very briefly my objections to its argument.

Dr. Dexter undertakes to maintain the thesis, that the doctrine of Roger Williams concerning religious liberty was not involved in his trial and banishment by the Massachusetts magistrates.

The historical soundness of this position I am obliged to question; for while it is doubtless true that this was not the sole cause of their proceeding against him, and may not have been made prominent before the court, it was clearly implied in the charges which resulted in his expulsion from the Plantation.

Dr. Dexter concedes (p. 65) "that it appears from Winthrop that in the previous July [previous to his trial] Mr. Williams had denied to the court the magistrate's power in matters of religion,"

though "it is not in evidence that that point was specifically made in the final trial." Let even this be admitted, yet it does not follow that this was not one of the motives which inspired the antagonism of his enemies. For reasons of their own, they may have omitted to make it particularly conspicuous; but that it was not entirely ignored, is proven by the sentence pronounced. This runs in the following terms:—

"Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church of Salem, hath broached & dyvulged dyvers newe & dangerous opinions, against the auctoritie of magistrates, as also writt lres of defamacon, both of the magistrates & churches here, & that before any conviccon, & yet mainetaineth the same without retraccon, it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depte out of this jurisdiccon within sixe weekes nowe nexte ensuing, w^{ch} if hee neglect to pforme, it shalbe lawfull for the Gou^r & two of the magistrates to send him to some places out of this jurisdiccon, not to returne any more without licence from the Court."

Then we have Mr. Williams's own statement of what the governor said when summing up the case:—

"He stood up and spake:

"Mr. Williams (said he) holds forth these 4 particulars:

“ *First*, That we have not our Land by Pattent from the King, but that the Natives are the true owners of it, and that we ought to repent of such a receiving it by Pattent.

“ *Secondly*, That it is not lawfull to call a wicked person to Sweare, to Pray, as being actions of God’s worship.

“ *Thirdly*, That it is not lawfull to heare any of the Ministers of the Parish Assemblies in England.

“ *Fourthly*, That the Civill Magistrates power extends only to the Bodies and Goods, and outward State of men, etc.”

If this fourth specification means any thing, it declares that conscience and the laws of worship are beyond the jurisdiction of civil courts. That it was understood to have this force, Dr. Dexter himself witnesses ; for he states that the opinions of Williams awakened the opposition which assailed them, because of the foothold they would inevitably give the Catholics in New England. But only the recognition of the principles of religious liberty by the government could entail upon the Plantation this peril ; and we must, therefore, conclude that it was this doctrine which young Williams was propagating.

Dr. Dexter reminds us that this troublesome agitator, “in one of his communications to Mr. Cotton, narrowed down the causes of his ‘banish-

ment' to a single one, and that he declared to be 'my humble and faithfull, and constant admonishing of them of such unclean walking between a particular Church (which they only professe to be Christs) and a Nationall.' "

But why was it that he carried this principle of *separatism* so far? Why was he so radical in his protest on this point? Was it not, because a national church is necessarily subversive of personal independence in religious concerns? Its existence is synonymous with spiritual usurpation; and to oppose its authority is to proclaim liberty of conscience. This testimony is therefore sufficient to prove the untenableness of the doctor's position; in confirmation of which, it may be well to add an extract from a letter written by Mr. Williams to Gov. Endicott, in which he says, —

"At present, let it not be offensive in your eyes, that I single out another, a fourth point, a cause of my Banishment also; wherein I greatly feare one or two sad evils, which have befallen your Soule and Conscience.

"The point is that of the Civill Magistrates dealing in matters of Conscience and Religion; as also of persecuting and hunting any for any matter meerly Spirituall and Religious."

The impression is conveyed by the "Monograph," that the teaching and influence of Roger Williams

were altogether revolutionary, and tended towards social, civil, and religious disorganization. Its learned author brings forward various witnesses to convict the man, who was to found Rhode Island, of rashness and impetuosity, of a lack of good judgment, deliberation, and discretion. Doubtless, he was at fault in these particulars. But reformers are generally far from being prudent and conservative. Indeed, it is questionable whether these qualities would qualify them for such work as they usually undertake. Men do not rise against grievous wrongs in cold blood, and, with equanimity perfectly preserved, pursue an exterminating warfare. Luther, Calvin, Knox, and the leaders among the Puritans in England, were no less radical than the Massachusetts reformer. If on this account the course of the Plantation authorities is to be leniently judged, how shall we condemn the bloody resistance of Catholicism to the inroads of Protestantism?

That the views of Mr. Williams necessarily tended in the direction indicated by Dr. Dexter, is disproven by the good government which subsequently obtained in Rhode Island; and, that their author never intended that they should subvert the legitimate authority of civil magistrates, may be gathered from his own statement of the doctrine he advocated. This doctrine he explained in January, 1654-5 (some twenty years after he left Salem), to

his fellow-citizens of Providence, in the following words : —

“That ever I should speak or write a tittle that tends to such an infinite liberty of conscience [as that it is blood-guiltiness, and contrary to the rule of the gospel, to execute judgment upon transgressors against the public or private weal], is a mistake, and which I have ever disclaimed and abhorred. To prevent such mistakes, I at present shall only propose this case : —

“There goes many a ship to sea, with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common; and is a true picture of a commonwealth, or an human combination, or society. It hath fallen out sometimes that both Papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked into one ship. Upon which supposal, I affirm that all the liberty of conscience that ever I pleaded for turns upon these two hinges: that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews or Turks, be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship; nor compelled from their own particular prayers or worship if they practice any. I further add, that I never denied, that, notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course; yea, and also command that justice, peace, and sobriety to be kept and practiced, both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform

their service, or passenger to pay their freight; if any refuse to help in person or purse, towards the common charges or defence; if any *refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common peace or preservation*; if any shall *mutiny and rise up against their commanders and officers*; if any should *preach or write* that there ought to be no commanders nor officers, because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters nor officers, no laws nor orders, no corrections nor punishments,—I say, I never denied but in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel, and punish such transgressors, according to their deserts and merits.”

At a later period, in more literal phrase, he distinctly wrote in a paper addressed to the town clerk of Providence, of date Jan. 12-25, 1680-1:—

“Government and order in families, towns, &c., is the ordinance of the Most High (Rom. xiii.) for the peace and good of mankind.

“It is written in the hearts of all mankind, even in pagans, that mankind cannot keep together without some government.

“No government is maintained without tribute, custom, rates, taxes, &c.

“It is but folly to resist (one or more, and, if one, why not more?). God hath stirred up the spirit of the governor, magistrates, and officers, driven to

it by necessity, to be unanimously resolved to see the matter finished ; and *it is the duty of every man to maintain, encourage, and strengthen the hand of authority.*”

If these extracts reflect the real sentiments of Roger Williams, — as, unquestionably, they do, — then there is no warrant in fact for the accusations so freely indulged in by the author of the “*Monograph.*” Their reiteration under the circumstances indicates the weakness of the cause defended, and appears like a resort to an ancient argument — the safety of the state — in extenuation of tyranny, for which the people of this age entertain no great respect. But, if the Puritans were really apprehensive of civil disorganization and social dislocation from his teachings, then it only proves that in statesmanship and penetration he was vastly superior to them ; for he foresaw, what his contemporaries only vaguely discerned, that liberty of conscience is compatible with the highest prosperity and security of a commonwealth.

I am sorry to observe, in making out his case, how lightly and disingenuously Dr. Dexter writes of the sufferings endured by the Baptists of New England. To judge from his statements, one would infer that the punishments inflicted were very trivial, hardly worth mentioning, and certainly not as severe as were deserved. He thus records one notable case : —

“In July, 1644, one Thomas Painter, then of Hingham, who seems to have been an idle, obstinate, and rather worthless person, suddenly turned Anabaptist; and, ‘having a child born, he would not suffer his wife to bring it to the ordinance of baptism.’ The matter was aggravated by the fact that he was not himself a member of any church, although his wife was; and by his ‘obstinacy’ and ‘very loose behavior.’ They thought they exercised much patience with him; but finally, because he was very poor, so as no other but corporal punishment could be fastened upon him, he was ordered to be whipped; *not for his opinion, but for reproaching the Lord’s ordinance*, and for his bold and evil behavior both at home and in the court.”

We have here a most remarkable distinction. The whipping was “not for his opinion, but for reproaching the Lord’s ordinance.” But it was his *opinion* that infant-baptism was not an ordinance of the Lord’s: he regarded it as of human origin, and, consequently, not to be observed by those who aimed only to acknowledge His authority.

Similar disingenuousness characterizes the account given of the treatment to which Obadiah Holmes was subjected, who in 1651 was publicly flogged for holding a meeting in Lynn, and for re-baptizing. The fact is simply recorded, that he received thirty stripes, though in a foot-note we have these words,

“Arnold thinks he was ‘cruelly whipped.’” — *History of Rhode Island*, i. 235. On this Dr. Dexter comments, “But Clarke (he means Holmes) says, ‘It was so easie to me that I could well bear it; yea, and in a manner felt it not;’” and that he told the magistrates after it was over, “‘You have struck me as with roses.’”

These words are designed to convey the impression that the punishment inflicted was very slight, and that the whole transaction was a species of child’s play. But the statement of Holmes, the very statement in fact from which Dr. Dexter takes his quotations, puts the matter in a very different light. I append it, that the readers of these pages may judge for themselves: —

“As the man began to lay the strokes upon my back, I said to the people, ‘Though my flesh should fail, and my spirit should fail, yet my God would not fail.’ So it pleased the Lord to come in, and so to fill my heart and tongue as a vessel full; and with an audible voice I broke forth praying unto the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge, and telling the people that now I found he did not fail me, and therefore now I should trust him forever who failed me not; for in truth, as the strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God’s presence as the like thereof I never had nor felt, nor can with fleshly tongue express; and the out-

ward pain was so removed from me, that indeed I am not able to declare it to you: it was so easy to me that I could well bear it, yea, and in a manner felt it not, although it was grievous, as the spectators said, the man striking with all his strength (yea, spitting in his hand three times, as many affirmed) with a three-corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes. When he had loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart, and cheerfulness in my countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, ‘You have struck me as with roses,’ and said moreover, ‘Although the Lord hath made it easy for me, yet I pray God it may not be laid to your charge.’ ”

This comparative unconsciousness of suffering was not due, then, to any lack of severity on the part of the persecutors, as our good doctor insinuates, but to the sustaining grace of God. The failure to make this clear in the “Monograph,” naturally creates unpleasant doubts as to the candor of its author, and does not increase our confidence in the accuracy of its other historical representations.

Before closing this review, I may be permitted a few words in answer to what he says concerning the Anabaptists. He argues that the Puritans should be excused for their treatment of New England Baptists, on the ground that they were “far from being prepossessed in their favor.” He adds that

they "supposed they had abundant warrant for the truth of statements involving the name of Anabaptist with the most indecent as well as painful frenzies; and they found the prominent good men, whose opinions they had been accustomed to receive on other subjects with the greatest deference, referring to such Anabaptists with a degree of reprobation which was surely calculated to impair the welcome with which they might receive any new-comers avowing that peculiar faith."

The list of authorities on which they relied, he appends, and supplements it with a formidable array of works, which the modern student who wishes to increase his knowledge of this sect may consult. All of these, however, indicate that he is more anxious to vindicate the Puritans, than to arrive at the truthfulness or falsity of the suspicions on which they acted. Indeed, he appears from the beginning to have pre-judged this much-abused body of Christians, and to have sought exclusively the testimony of those who were inclined to make out a case against them. A spirit of candor would have constrained him, while referring to the prejudices of the Puritans in exoneration of their apparent intolerance, to have shown that there are good reasons for believing that they labored under unhappy misapprehensions.

What he failed to give, I shall take the liberty of supplying.

Max Goebel (*Gesch. des Christlichen Lebens in Westphalen*) doubts "whether any such thorough-going moral reform had been attempted since the days of Christ, as that of the Anabaptists of the Reformation."

Hess (*Life of Zwingli*) says of them, "that, unable to rise to a higher standpoint, they sought to restore the manner of life of the early Christians."

Jörg (*History of Protestantism*) testifies that "all the Anabaptists wanted was an entirely new church, a church of believers."

Hast (*Geschichte der Taufgesinnten*) observes, that "the doctrine of spiritual regeneration, the soul of Christianity, has perhaps never been taught with deeper feeling, and adhered to with greater zeal, than by the despised Anabaptists. Their aim was the highest possible, — a church of saints. Nowhere in church history is found such a subjugation of all other motives to the religious, such an approach to the order and life of the Church of the Apostles." Hase further adds (*Neue Propheten*), "The great danger of the Anabaptist heresy lay in the holiness of life to which its adherents could refer. In general they maintained the stern heroic morals of ancient Christianity. In baptism they foreswore the world, the flesh, and the Devil. After the fall of Münster, they established everywhere a sincerely literal Bible Christianity."

And Hast expresses the opinion that Melancthon's writings against the Anabaptists are not to be acquitted "of the suspicion of bitter prejudice."

Cornelius, in his *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufruhrs*, also bears most favorable testimony, and by his account of this sect reveals the secret of the remarkable complaint made by Dr. Erhard, as quoted by Hast, that "the Anabaptists have been made honorable, and are now (1835) described as persecuted innocents."

Alexandre Weill (*Histoire de la Guerre des Anabaptistes*) writing from an entirely unbiased standpoint, declares that they were republicans, from whom came Presbyterians, afterwards Cromwell, and later Washington and Jefferson; and that "neither Luther nor Zwingli, nor any of their honest adversaries, ever accused them of immorality." He further testifies that they "created the religion of the poor, and abolished odious distinctions between master and slave." Some of these principles, he says, are only ideals as yet, awaiting the future.

Authorities need not be multiplied excessively; especially, as the few we have quoted, are sufficient to prove that there are reasons for believing that these down-trodden servants of Jesus have been sadly misrepresented by their enemies. And if this is the case, and the early Baptists of America corresponded in life and sentiment in any marked degree

to these poor persecuted ones, then the Puritans in their treatment of them were guilty of intolerance, and not even the gifted pen of Dr. Dexter can successfully extenuate their conduct. To defend it logically, would be to defend more than even the brilliant author of the "Monograph," I suspect, would be willing to stand for, — the suppression of opinion by force, and the practice of tyranny, civil and religious everywhere.

The Baptist denomination is so fashioned, that it is next to impossible for her to form an alliance with the State. To effect any such union, she would be compelled, first of all, to abandon her distinctive character; that is, cease to be Baptist.

Throughout all periods of her existence, she has affirmed the essential spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and the obligation of its members to be responsible only to its Head. In this regard, her ancient teachings anticipated the widely received opinions of modern society.

A great deal is now being said of the advance of thought in evangelical theology. In some cases it is more than likely that this boasting really means that a few erratic, brilliant preachers are rapidly eliminating the evangelical from their theology, and are advancing towards the glittering hopelessness and shining barrenness of Unitarianism. But, when

the progress is not retrogression, I think that it will be found steadily setting in the direction of those views which have distinguished the Baptists for centuries. Clergymen are breaking away from former ecclesiastical associations, to proclaim what they conceive to be novelties, when in fact, their new doctrines are only modern presentations of some old Baptist teachings. With the air of a theological Columbus, some of these gentlemen are announcing their wonderful discoveries; and thousands of good-meaning people are giving them credit for an amount of hardihood and penetration which they do not possess. They declare, as the very latest development in the progress of religious thought, that, after all, Christ is the substance of Christianity, that outward ordinances cannot impart inward grace, that church establishments cannot save, and that every soul is answerable to God, and to God alone, for its faith. But these sentiments, now so popular when they are proclaimed from platforms, and are well garnished with rhetoric, do not differ materially from the fundamental principles of the Baptists.

They have taught from the beginning of their history, that, without exception, a gospel church consists of those who have been renewed by Christ's Spirit, who are bound together more by moral affinity than by ecclesiastical ties, and who express their faith more distinctly through righteousness,

peace, and joy, than in solemn rites or stately ceremonies. In their judgment, no man's religious standing can be settled by ordinances, no man's hope can be founded on the mediation of earthly priests, and no man's creed can be decided by the decree of temporal sovereigns. It is their belief that only the commerce of the Almighty with the soul can quicken its spiritual life; that only the atonement of the Messiah can furnish it with ground of acceptance; and that only the revelation of truth in the Scriptures can supply it with a "*credo*."

The Baptists teach that faith is not hereditary, and cannot in any sense be transmitted. They declare that even the articles of a creed cannot be accepted on parental or priestly authority, but must always be the result of personal investigation, reflection, and prayer. Each man in reality only believes what he has painfully wrought out for himself, either by an examination of evidence, or by the careful observation of his own spiritual experience; and this position the Baptists, with marked consistency, stoutly and steadfastly maintain.

They further contend for the duty of absolute and unquestioning obedience to the least word of Heaven. What God commands, they affirm man is bound to obey. If He has taken the trouble to reveal His will, His creatures should certainly take pains to submit to its requirements. To question, to

frame excuses for non-compliance, and especially to substitute strange practices in the place of His appointments, in Baptist theology, as in Scripture teaching, is to rebel against the Almighty.

For such a body as this to form an alliance with the State, is so utterly at variance with its constitution as to be impracticable; and, I am happy it is in my power to affirm, that its members have never acted so inconsistently as to try and render such a union possible. Every thing like it they have rejected, treating every proposal and every movement looking towards any thing of the kind in the most decisive manner. What is more remarkable even, they have never yet produced an author who has advocated the exercise of civil authority to control or determine religious belief.

Let it not be said that the Baptists have never been favored with opportunities to test the integrity of their convictions upon this subject. They have been tempted on various occasions to adopt the prevalent practice, and could have availed themselves of state patronage. In Holland, about the beginning of the present century, overtures of this character were made to them by the king of that country, influenced, doubtless, by the history of the Dutch Baptists written by Ypeig and Dermont; but they were declined on principle. The Legislature of Georgia, in 1784, passed a law giving three-

pence per pound of moneys in the treasury to the support of any minister that might be called to his parish by thirty families. The Baptist Association of that State, in the following year, protested against the law, and sent Silas Mercer and Peter Smith to the seat of government to petition for its repeal. State patronage under the Assessment Bill was offered them in Virginia in 1784. According to its provisions, every citizen was to be taxed to support religion, but was to have the liberty of saying to which denomination his tax should be applied. The Baptists perceived the drift of the measure, that it was really a reliance on the civil arm, that it recognized its right to meddle with ecclesiastical affairs, and was unjust towards those who rejected Christianity: consequently, they opposed it, and finally succeeded in defeating it. At an earlier period (1656), the contiguous Colonies urged Rhode Island to join them, and crush the Quakers; but she returned this answer: "We shall strictly adhere to the foundation principles on which the colony was first settled; i.e., liberty of conscience in religious concernments." Well did Dr. Francis Wayland say of the Baptists, "When they have obtained the power to persecute in turn, they used that power only to return good for evil, and by granting to their persecutors every right which they claimed for themselves. When any sect can lay claim to higher or

more honorable distinction, we will bow before them, and cheerfully yield them Christian precedence."

The members of this communion from an earlier period in history than is generally recognized, appear to have felt that the indications of Providence, as well as the genius of their system, pointed to them as the Heaven-ordained pioneers of soul-liberty. Under this impression, it did not satisfy them merely to keep their own churches clear from unhallowed affiliations with secular governments, but they undertook the much more difficult task of rescuing all Christian denominations from such unscriptural and perilous fellowships. The antiquity, variety, and extent of their labors in this service, deserve from every lover of human progress, and especially from those who have inherited the fruit of the seed which they sowed in tears, pain, and blood, more than an ordinary notice.

Principal Cunningham says, "The Anabaptists of the Reformation seem to have been the first, if Donatists be excepted, who stumbled upon the voluntary principle." Fuller, the English Church historian, declares that "the Baptists of his day were the Donatists new-dipped;" and Neander, testifying to the origin of the latter sect in 311, adds that they were distinguished for their "ideas concerning liberty of conscience, concerning the rights of free religious conviction." — *History of*

Religion, vol. ii. pp. 182–217. This author also refers to a treatise on Antichrist, which was published by the Waldenses earlier than 1120, the date usually assigned it, in which we have the following description: “He arrived at maturity when men whose hearts were set upon the world multiplied in the Church, and by the union of Church and State got the power of both into their hands;” also it is declared, “We hold in abhorrence all human inventions, as proceeding from Antichrist, which produce distrust, and are prejudicial to the liberty of mind.” All the confessions of this ancient body of Christians, which I have been able to consult, studiously avoid any terms that might seem to recognize the right of the civil magistrate to regulate in affairs of the conscience. Among this simple people, in the sublime solitudes of their valleys, the idea of soul-liberty was nourished and cherished, ready, in God’s good time, to assert its authority before the entire world.

Of the identity of this people with the Baptists, I cannot now speak at length. Limborch, whose account of them Dr. Wall indorses as the most reliable, declares that they bore the greatest resemblance to the Mennonites, or modern Dutch Baptists. Also Starck, the court preacher of Darmstadt (*Hist. of Bapt., Leipsic*, 1789, pp. 115, 118), when referring to the Anabaptists, testifies, “that although

they held a connection with Munzer, Storck, Grebel, Stubner, and Keller, the Waldenses were their predecessors."

They are likewise attended to by that rampant ritualist, W. J. E. Bennett of Frome (*The History of the Church Broken*), where he writes, —

"The historian Lingard tells us that there was a sect of fanatics who infested the North of Germany, called Puritans. Usher calls them Waldenses; Spelman, Paulicians (the same as Waldenses). They gained ground, and spread all over England. They rejected all Romish ceremonies, denied the authority of the Pope, and more particularly *refused to baptize infants*. Thirty of them were put to death for their heretical doctrines, near Oxford; but the remainder still held on to their opinions in private until the time of Henry II. (1158); and the historian Collier tells us that, wherever this heresy prevailed, the churches were either scandalously neglected or pulled down, and *infants left unbaptized*."

While other writers can be cited on the Baptist side of the controversy, such as Morland, Chesannion, Dr. Potter, and Charvaz, there are not a few able authors who entertain the very opposite convictions. Indeed, so great a diversity of opinion has obtained upon the subject, that the Presbyterian tries to make them out Presbyterians; the Episcopalian, Episcopalians; and even the Catholics, by Pius

Melia, in a work dedicated to Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte, contend that this sect did not originate until 1170, and at first differed from Rome only in regard to the privileges of laymen. An historical defence of the Waldenses, by Jean Rodolphe Peyran, dedicated to Frederick William, King of Prussia, runs entirely counter to some of these representations, and gives from one of their most ancient creeds this view of baptism, without ever a word regarding infants in it: "We believe that God instituted the sacrament of baptism for a testimony of our adoption, and that we might be washed from our sins in the blood of Christ, and renewed unto holiness of life."

We know they were not Catholics, because they denounced Rome as Antichrist; neither were they Episcopalians, because George Maurel, quoted by Scultetus in his *Annales*, distinctly stated to Ecolampadius that they had but two orders in the ministry; and they do not seem to have been Pædobaptists originally, for Starck maintains, with no small degree of conclusiveness, that they rejected infant-baptism.

It is clear that not much confidence can be felt in the representations of what the ancient Waldenses believed, by what their successors since the Reformation have taught; for a kind of union was effected between them and the Calvinists at Angrogna in

1532, which doubtless modified their views in some respects. But, I do not think I overstep the bounds of modesty when I express the opinion, that cherishing among themselves perfect liberty of conscience, and worshipping not the idol uniformity, there may have been divisions, as there are now in the great Protestant party, on the minor though important questions of ordinances. With this qualification, Baptists undoubtedly may be identified with the Waldenses, and so be identified with the earliest adherents of religious freedom.

From the valleys of these simple worshippers came Walter Lollard into England about the year 1315. Fuller, the church historian already quoted, gives this fact, and speaks very highly of his character. His disciples soon coalesced with those of Wyckliffe, and were ultimately called by his name. I cannot but question the sufficiency of the evidence on which Wyckliffe is claimed as a Baptist, though I think it very likely that very many of the Lollards were in full accord with the teachings of that body.

It is far from improbable that some among the Lollards, may have practiced infant-baptism; but Thomas Waldensis, the chronicler, puts on record "that they acknowledged but two sacraments, and administered baptism only to adults." If he is correct, then the rite of infant-baptism may only have been tolerated, as the lines were never drawn

between those who differed from Rome, as sharply before the rise of Luther as they have been since. But, whatever may have been the views of the majority on gospel ordinances, they gave no doubtful sound when the cause of soul-liberty needed witnesses; for as Green in his recent *History of the English People*, p. 264, says, "It was in the preaching of John Ball (a Lollard) that England first listened to the knell of feudalism, and the declaration of the rights of man." Thus we may trace the planting of the germ of freedom in English soil, where it was to take root, and grow into a stately tree, whose leaves should be for the healing of the nations.

Its growth was much facilitated in England by the arrival of many Anabaptists from Germany. Bishop Burnet testifies that they were not few in number in 1549; and Collier (vol. ii. 577) refers to their many conventicles in 1589. Latimer, who could not speak too badly of the Baptists, nevertheless bears witness to their numbers and intrepidity: "Here I have to tell you what I heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and a worshipful man, of a town in this realm of England, that hath about five hundred of heretics of this erroneous opinion in it. The Anabaptists that were burnt here, in divers towns of England (as I have heard of credible men: I saw them not myself), met their

death even intrepid, as you will say, without any fear in the world. Well, let them go. There was in the old times another kind of poisoned heretics, that were called Donatists ; and those heretics went to their execution as they should have gone to some jolly recreation and banquet."

Marsden tells us, that, in the days of Elizabeth, "the Anabaptists were the most numerous, and for some time by far the most formidable, opponents of the Church. They are said to have existed in England since the early days of the Lollards."

These people had fled from their native land because of the bitter persecutions which beset them ; for ; as Vierordt, in his *History of the Reformation in Baden*, says, "No religious party can relatively show as many martyrs as these Anabaptists." They fared but little better in England than in Germany. More than once were they excluded from royal clemency ; and frequently were they stretched on the rack, torn by the lash, or given to the flames.

Doubtless much of the bitterness felt towards them arose from their connection with the movement in Germany, known as the Peasants' War, which was not free from various excesses both in theory and practice. The misapprehension of the part they bore in that struggle, as we have already gathered from Dr. Dexter, prejudiced the mind of the Puritans towards their descendants in

New England, and has served to point attacks upon them even in these more modern times.

Of course it is no part of my plan to enter upon a complete review of the facts in the case ; but a few words may be allowed me, just to show how prejudice on the one hand, and ignorance on the other, have warped the judgment of their critics.

The oft-repeated declaration that the Baptists originated with this revolt is absurd, as there were many of the order in England before the fatal enterprise was set on foot. Bishop Burnet acknowledges that this denomination has been unjustly injured by being identified with the men who engaged in political disturbances of Münster. He attributes the rise of the Baptists in Germany to their carrying out the principles of Luther, regarding the sufficiency of Scripture and the rights of private judgment. (*History of the Reformation*, ii. 176.) But Mosheim goes farther when he says, "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed, in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists." Their origin, therefore, cannot be traced to the Peasants' War ; and, though some of them did take part in that fatal effort, we must agree with Bayle where he expresses the conviction, that "many Anabaptists who suffered death for their opinions had no thought of

making an insurrection.” — Art. “*Anabaptists*” in *Historical and Critical Dictionary*.

The truth is, this wide-sweeping revolution arose from two causes, — first, the galling slavery of the feudal system, which pressed sorely on the humbler classes ; second, the spirit of liberty, which the writings of Luther had done much to stimulate. The example, also, of Luther must have had much to do with the revolt. He had defied the pope’s authority, and had been declared an enemy of the holy empire. He had bravely and practically maintained his right to think for himself ; and his course was not calculated to promote the spirit of absolute submission in the lowly. In their bosom burned the imperishable love of liberty, — a love greater in the oppressed masses than in the privileged few, and naturally it impelled them to take advantage of the unsettled times to shake off the galling yoke of rulers, temporal as well as spiritual.

The troubles were commenced in 1525. Soon the peasants were in arms, and their grievances were drawn up in twelve articles, written, according to Stern, the latest authority, by Hubmeyer the Baptist pastor of Waldshut, and sent to the princes of Germany. This document drew from Voltaire an eloquent eulogium ; and it deserves the admiration of every freeman, as it was simply a grand protest against tyranny. They plead for “reli-

gious instruction ;” they declare “ their willingness to submit to the control of magistrates, but not to be slaves, unless slavery could be proved right from the Holy Scripture.” Had their representations been attended to, the front of armed rebellion would have changed to that of submission. But they were not. The force of the empire was directed against them ; and, feeling that they had no mercy to expect from their oppressors, some of their more ignorant and excitable leaders were betrayed into excesses, which compromised the whole movement, and which have covered their descendants with unmerited opprobrium.

These excesses should be condemned ; but, at the same time it should not be forgotten, that the uprising was the initial effort in Europe towards complete emancipation from tyranny both civil and religious. They attempted, what was afterwards more successfully undertaken by the Puritans for themselves in the English Revolution. Both parties earnestly engaged, under different circumstances, in furtherance of the same glorious cause ; and both were seriously injured by the extravagances of fanatics. If the Anabaptists are to be stigmatized as a class, because of the high-handed proceedings and wild vagaries of their fanatical members, why should the Puritans be honored, when not a few of their number were absurd extremists and uncontroll-

able zealots? Neither body, as a whole, deserves such unqualified censure; for it will be found that the most sacred revolutions cannot escape the distorting influence of half-crazy adherents.

In estimating the Anabaptist movement in Germany, this should be remembered; and it should not be overlooked, that this was the first wave of that great ocean of political freedom which broke over France, which submerged royalty in America, and which to-day, like the sea of glass that appeared to John, calmly covers the hills and valleys of our beloved country.

Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon, who has enjoyed rare opportunities of forming an intelligent opinion of the merits and demerits of the Peasants' War, has put on record his conclusions in words which confirm what I have just written, and which I commend to the candid consideration of those who are willing to deal justly by the memory of noble men who have been ungenerously treated. He says:—

“The time will probably arrive when history will be re-written, and the maligned Baptists of Holland and Germany will be acquitted of all complicity with the ravings of the insane fanatics; and it will be proved that they were the advance-guard of the army of religious liberty, men who lived ahead of their times, but whose influence might have saved the world centuries of floundering in the bog of semi-

popery if they had but been allowed fair play. As it was, their views, like those of modern Baptists, so completely laid the axe at the root of all priestcraft and sacramentarianism, that violent opposition was aroused ; and the two-edged sword of defamation and extirpation was set to its cruel work, and kept to it with a relentless perseverance never excelled, perhaps never equalled. All other sects may be in some degree borne with ; but Baptists are utterly intolerable to priests and popes, neither can despots and tyrants endure them."

Hubmeyer, to whom I have referred, on whose character and work modern scholarship is throwing much light, thus sets forth their doctrine of soul-liberty, in thesis and in friendly disputation with the reformers : —

"Faith is in the heart, and you cannot force that by threats and chains. Thought and belief may not be obstructed by violence, or fettered by disabilities, but are to toll free, in all travel and commerce of mind." More fully, "On Heretics, and those who burn them," he defends even Turks and atheists, and all possible offenders, as well as nominal Christian sects, from persecution. His words are : —

"The burning of heretics cannot be justified by the Bible. There are two kinds of heretics. One class, at the head of which stand Satan and his

followers, embraces all those impiously opposing the Holy Scriptures as the word of God. The other class includes those who falsely interpret the Holy Scriptures, put ruler for pastor, Rome for church, &c. Although little good can be expected from such people, still they should be instructed with gentleness; and, if that bears no fruit, then we should depart from them. Christ himself demands that the tares should be allowed to grow with the wheat. From that and other passages it is evident that those who kill heretics are themselves the greatest heretics. For Christ did not come to slay, destroy, or burn, but to keep and improve, all men. We should therefore pray and hope for improvement as long as a man lives. Besides, a Turk or a Jew cannot be convinced by force of the sword, but only by patience and instruction. Therefore to burn heretics is only to confess Christ in appearance, but to deny him in fact.

“It is a still greater crime to burn to ashes as heretics without a hearing, and without being overcome by the truth, those who are the expounders and exemplars of the word of God. There is no greater deception of the people than that apparent zeal for God, for the welfare of souls, the honor of the church, old usages, &c., which is not based on the authority of the Scriptures. For men should not presume to do any thing better or more

reliable than what God has declared. It may be scripturally justifiable to burn profane books, but it is a small thing to burn innocent paper. To point out errors, and then overthrow them with the Scripture, that is art."

As in Germany, so on English soil, these Anabaptists stood forth before all men, the uncompromising advocates of freedom. Dr. Some, a clergyman during the reign of Elizabeth, wrote a treatise in which he charged them with holding, "that ministers ought to be maintained by the voluntary principle; that the civil magistrate has no right to make and impose laws on the consciences of men." — *Neal*, ii. 360. Whitgift accuses them of teaching, that "the civil magistrate hath no authority in ecclesiastical matters; that he ought not to meddle in cases of religion and faith; and that Christians ought to punish faults, not with imprisonment, not with the sword, or corporal punishment, but only with excommunication." — *Works*, i. 78-110; *Cramp.*, pp. 280-283. With such elements in England, with such people settling there from various quarters, spreading such sentiments, no wonder that the movement to secure soul-liberty should assume vaster proportions, and manifest itself in broader efforts for its triumph.

Early in the seventeenth century, to escape from persecution, many Baptists and Independents fled

into Holland. Among them were John Robinson, to whom I have already referred ; and John Smyth, who became the representative of Baptist principles abroad. Whether from intercourse with the Dutch Baptists in Holland, or from a previous investigation of their views, I cannot satisfactorily determine ; but through some cause Smyth became the bold, outspoken champion of religious liberty. He died about the year 1611 ; and in company with Mr. Helwisse, another of the exiles, the Church he established returned to England. Robinson did not sympathize with Smyth's doctrine ; and possibly this incompatibility experienced not alone by these brethren, but by others in their native land, measurably destroyed the alliance that appears to have existed between the Baptists and Independents.

We know at least, that from this period the Baptists separate themselves from other communions, and become more distinctly a denomination in Great Britain. They may have had a few churches of their own prior to this time, though it is very probable that they had mingled more or less freely in ecclesiastical relations with those who were in accord with them on the saving doctrines of the Bible. But at last, realizing the irrepressible conflict of views which existed on other topics, they may have concluded that loyalty to conscience demanded of them a separate organization, that their own liberty

might be maintained, and that of their brethren, who differed from them, remain inviolate. Be this as it may, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, Baptist churches, as such, come into greater prominence, and are found with greater pertinacity than ever enunciating, elaborating, and publishing their views of religious liberty.

In 1611 the London Baptist Confession of Faith was published, in which are these golden words: "We believe that the magistrate is not to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, nor compel men to this or that form of religion, because Christ is king and lawgiver of the Church and conscience." This was followed, three years later, by the first modern treatise upon this article of faith. Its title is, "Religious Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience;" and it was written by Leonard Busher, a Baptist. The spirit of the whole performance may be gathered from this forceful and broad statement: "That it may be lawful for every person or persons, yea, Jews, Turks, Pagans, and Papists, to write, dispute, confer, and reason, print and publish any matter, touching any religion, either for or against whomsoever." The work of Busher was republished more than once by the denomination of which he was a member, showing that his brethren heartily indorsed its sentiments.

Another treatise appeared in 1615, from the pen of

a Baptist, bearing the title, "Persecution for Religion judged and condemned by Christ's unworthy witnesses, His Majesty's faithful Subjects, commonly but most falsely called Anabaptists." It maintained the doctrine that "earthly authority belongeth to earthly kings, but spiritual authority belongeth to that one spiritual King who is king of kings."

Roger Williams refers to another notable document upon this subject, which was written in Newgate Prison. Denied ink, its authors employed milk, which afterwards, being held to a fire, became legible, and was copied. Williams says, with great impressiveness, "Their arguments were written in milk, and answered in blood."

It is not possible to give an account here of all the literary contributions of Baptist witnesses, toward the complete exposition of their views regarding freedom. One work by Thomas Richardson (1647), one by prisoners in Maidstone Jail (1660), another yet called "Zion's Groans" (1662), and a mass of creeds, confessions, and defences, swell the volume of their testimony in behalf of this sacred cause.

So potent was the influence of these productions, that, combined with similar private and public oral teachings of Baptist pastors and laymen, many who were not of their way of thinking in other respects, were led to sympathize with their views on the

sovereignty of conscience. The revolution under Cromwell, while not aiming to vindicate the central doctrine of the down-trodden Baptists, could not but be largely indebted for its inspiration to their hatred of tyranny and love of independence, as it was for its successes to their courage and fidelity. Their names are prominently associated with the great events of this wonderful upheaval of society.

There were Tombes, Jessey, Dyke, Gosnald, Knollys, and Denne, who had held priestly orders in the Established Church, and who became distinguished upholders of the Protector's policy. There also was Collins, a pupil of Busby; De Veil, a convert from Judaism; Dell, a chaplain of Lord Fairfax, and, till the Restoration, head of one of the colleges in the University of Cambridge; and Vavasor Powell, Thomas Delaune, Benjamin Keach, and John Bunyan. Among these Baptists stood Overton, a friend of Milton, who in 1651 was second in command under Cromwell in Scotland; Admiral Penn of the English Navy, father of the American Colonist; Fleetwood, Cromwell's son-in-law; and Major-Gen. Harrison, who was brutally executed, on the return of the Stuarts, as a regicide.

The enthusiasm with which Baptists espoused the cause of liberty may be inferred from the hearty commendation they received from Cromwell in his letter to the House of Commons, reporting the battle

of Naseby. Thomas Carlyle quotes the letter in full (*Oliver Cromwell*, vol. i. 169), and comments on these sentences: "Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sirs, they are trusty: I beseech you, in the name of God, not to discourage them. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for;" on which Carlyle says, "The 'honest men' are the considerable portion of the army who have not yet succeeded in bringing themselves to take the covenant; whom the Presbyterian party, vigorous for their own formula, call 'schismatics,' 'sectaries,' 'Anabaptists,' and other hard names; whom Cromwell here and elsewhere earnestly pleads for."

Neither should it be forgotten, that these same 'honest men,' who stood so loyally with Cromwell at Naseby, in equal honesty stood against him when he appeared to be usurping prerogatives which belonged to the people; and with still grander honesty entreated him, when a misguided Parliament urged him to assume the kingly rank, not to wound the old cause he had served so well, by accepting the crown of England. (*Milton's State Papers*, p. 142.)

But, if the revolution may be measurably attributed to the influence of Baptists, so to their noble confidence in the power of truth, to their ceaseless struggle against the empire of prejudice, and to their

comprehensive views of civil government, may be traced the tone of thought essentially opposed to persecution, which, during this and subsequent periods, distinguished the writings of some who are now regarded as among the chief ornaments of other religious communities.

Thus Chillingworth, a Churchman, and a zealous supporter of King Charles, in 1637, just twenty-five years after the publication of Busher's "Plea for Liberty of Conscience," and twenty-six years after the appearance of the "London Baptist Confession," drew with a bold and unfaltering hand the outline of that immortal principle on which rests the Protestant system. He may not have realized that the logical outcome of his argument in defence of the right of private judgment was diametrically opposed to the Royalist cause and to the Establishment, but it was so, nevertheless. And it has since proved one of the mightiest engines employed in fashioning the modern liberal sentiment of England.

Jeremy Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying" has been highly praised, and has exerted an immense influence. It was a noble attempt for an Episcopalian to make towards the exercise of toleration. This, however, is all that can be claimed for it. Toleration was its theme, while the Baptist works which preceded it demanded absolute liberty. The

Churchman also advocated rather a narrow toleration ; for he writes, “Anabaptists are as much to be rooted out as any thing that is the greatest pest and nuisance ;” and, unfortunately for his consistency, he wrote his book in exile, and, to a certain extent, abandoned its principles when his Church regained her ascendancy. On which Coleridge remarks, “If Jeremy Taylor had not in effect retracted after the restoration ; if he had not, as soon as the Church had gained power, most basely disclaimed and disavowed the principle of toleration, and apologized for the publication by declaring it to have been a *ruse de guerre*, currying pardon for his past liberalism by charging and most probably slandering himself with the guilt of falsehood, treachery, and hypocrisy,—his character as a man would have been almost stainless.” — *Notes on English Divines*, i. 209.

But, of all the champions who have defended the doctrine of religious liberty, John Milton is the grandest, even as “Areopagitica,” the tract in which he embodied his opinions, represents the very highest point that English eloquence has attained. Even now it cannot be read without deep emotion ; and when it appeared, in 1644, it must have exerted an immense influence on all classes of society, especially on the more cultured. His advocacy of a cause which had been prejudiced by its Anabaptistical as-

sociations must measurably have relieved it of odium, and have inclined the more enlightened and conservative to consider it seriously and candidly. By his eloquence, Milton revealed the beauty of Liberty, and charmed even those hearts that had despised her heavenly form when unveiled by the homely speech of Anabaptists. He summoned literature to the support of Liberty; he arrayed her in its silken robes, and crowned her with its gold and jewels; and to-day the world, in its admiration of the wondrous drapery which he hung in graceful folds about her figure, quite overlooks the poor, despised Anabaptists, who rescued her life from destruction, and nourished her into healthful activity on their own blood.

It is now stoutly maintained by some students of history, that Milton himself was a member of this sect. The theological writings which are credited to his pen, and which bear internal marks of his authorship, are put in as evidence of this claim. It is likewise well known, that Dr. Featly, a Presbyterian controversialist, in 1644 entreated "the most noble lords" that Milton might be cut off "as a pestilent Anabaptist." Moreover, it cannot be denied that some coloring of probability is imparted to this opinion by the well-known lines from "*Paradise Regained*:" —

“ To his disciples, men who in this life
Still followed him, — to them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learned,
And his salvation; *them who shall believe,*
Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life ;
Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death like that which the Redeemer died.”

Here, at least, neither infant-baptism nor aspersion is countenanced. While these arguments can hardly be deemed sufficient to establish the point in question, they clearly prove that the poet and statesman was so intimate with this people, and so fully in sympathy with them, that he exposed himself to such accusations as that brought by Dr. Featly. He was not ashamed of their fellowship; and who can tell how far the world is indebted to it for the noble testimony he bore, a testimony which has caused the enthusiasm of liberty to thrill through every generation of Englishmen since his day?

These agencies, and others such as these, inspired by the simple appeals and the heroic attitude of the Baptist fathers, have advanced the cause of religious freedom to a commanding position in Great Britain. In the hearts of its people, excepting only those whose personal interests are identified with the maintenance of Church and State, it has found an abiding home and a secure retreat. The convic-

tions and sentiments of its citizens are in advance of its legislation. The Establishment yet remains, and unequal laws still press sorely upon Dissenters. The government has risen no higher than to enactments assuring toleration; but this, in its broadest sense, reigns throughout the land. This unsatisfactory arrangement, however, cannot long endure. Many years cannot now elapse before the sentiment of the nation must conquer its legislation, and then the majesty of law shall recognize and shelter the majesty of liberty, and the last trace of ecclesiastical tyranny vanish from the British empire.

This final reform seems destined to reach the mother-country by the way of America. What Berkeley in his well-known stanza wrote of empire, may with equal truth be affirmed of freedom:—

“ Westward the course of *freedom* takes its way:

The four first acts already past,

A fifth shall close the drama with the day:

Time’s noblest offspring is the last.”

The fifth act in this drama presents the struggles of the Baptists, and of those who co-operated with them, for the triumph of religious liberty upon this continent. It also marks a growing unity of sentiment upon this subject, and makes sure the dawning of the day, when spiritual despotism shall no more be known among men.

America is the only country, where such a provision as this can be found ingrafted upon its Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This is part of the first amendment made to the fundamental instrument of our government; for as originally framed it simply declared that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." It will be perceived, that this article did not in express terms prohibit Congress from erecting a state religion, or interfering with the free exercise of religion otherwise than as regards office. This was not satisfactory to the people; and, in consequence, the amendment was adopted, which imparts a purely secular character to the government of the United States.

According to its representation, logically interpreted, we have over us a purely secular organization, contrived and devised for purely secular ends; and whatever of religion may exist within its jurisdiction is entirely independent of its authority and patronage. The faith of the nation is personal, not governmental: it is one of the reserved rights of the people, and is not vested, in any sense, in the earthly powers that have rule over them.

As it appears evident by the enactment of the first amendment to the Constitution, that religious

liberty, as we now understand it, did not spring full-orbed and complete in the United States, we should endeavor to trace the stages of its development, especially, if we would understand and appreciate the relation of the Baptists to its triumph.

It is well known, that, previous to the outbreak of the American Revolution, some form of church establishment, ordained by law, was familiar to the people of most of the Colonies. Ramsay states (*History of the United States*, p. 232) that the exceptions were Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. But Pennsylvania does not appear to have been entirely free of the taint; for with all of the Quaker devotion to freedom of conscience, — derived most likely, as far as William Penn was concerned, from his Baptist father, — those who separated from the regular order in 1691 appear to have suffered unfair treatment, fines and imprisonments, at the hands of their brethren. George Keith, one of the dissenting Quakers, was arrested and imprisoned, and obtained his freedom from a Baptist magistrate, John Holmes, who ruled “that it was a religious dispute, and therefore not fit for a civil court.” — Benedict, *History*, 597; Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia*, vol. ii. 456.

This condition of affairs, as we have already seen, exposed the Baptists to many cruel trials and persecutions; but all of their sufferings could not weaken

their devotion to the Scripture principle of freedom. They continued its consistent and most persistent advocates.

The first treatise published in its defence upon this continent, was from the pen of one who had embraced their sentiments, — Roger Williams. In harmony with the doctrine laid down in “The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience,” he began “the first civil government that gave equal liberty of conscience.” Through all the weary years which succeeded the founding of Rhode Island until the dawning of the Revolution, the Baptists North and South sympathized most heartily with the liberal spirit of its charter; and, with the beginning of troubles between the mother-country and her colonies, set on foot a series of agitations which resulted gloriously in the adoption of the first constitutional amendment.

Their labors in Virginia were memorable, and had a remarkable influence upon the whole land. Campbell, a Presbyterian, referring to the conflict in that commonwealth, testifies that “the Baptists, having suffered persecution under the Establishment, were of all others the most inimical to it, and the most active in its subversion.” Of them Bishop Meade says, “They took the lead in dissent, and were the chief object of persecution by the magistrates, and the most violent afterward in seeking

the downfall of the Establishment.” — *History of Virginia*, 555; Mead’s *History*, i. 52.

In August, 1775, the General Association of Virginia memorialized the convention of that State, declaring that military resistance ought to be made to Great Britain, and requested permission to serve in the army as chaplains. It was likewise added, “We hold that the mere toleration of religion by the civil government is not sufficient; that no State establishment ought to exist; that all religious denominations ought to stand upon the same footing; and that to all alike the protection of the government should be extended, securing to them the peaceable enjoyment of their own religious principles and modes of worship. Whilst we assert for ourselves a freedom to assert, to profess, and to observe the religion we believe to be of divine origin, we cannot deny an equal freedom to those whose minds have not yielded to the evidence which has convinced us.”

The convention responded to this declaration of principles, by conceding to the Baptists and other dissenters the privilege of preaching to the troops, &c.; and in 1776, through the special efforts of James Madison, incorporated the substance of this declaration in Art. XVI. of the Virginia Bill of Rights. In the same year, “an act for exempting the different denominations of dissenters from con-

tributing to the support and maintenance of the church as by law established, and for its ministers," was carried. This was a wonderful step in advance, and culminated in 1777, through petitions from Baptists and Presbyterians, in a comprehensive statute that suspended the collection of taxes for the support of religious teachers.

The controversies and agitations incident to such a revolution did not end here. Another memorial was presented by the Baptists in 1785; and upon its basis Mr. Jefferson drew the act for establishing religious freedom. Although its main principles had already been lawfully carried, it was needful, as it had met with opposition, that it should come up for final disposement. After a lengthy and earnest debate, it became a statute of the Commonwealth.

Jefferson always recognized the signal service which the leaders in this movement had rendered the State.

Writing to the members of the Baptist Church of Buck Mountain, who were his neighbors, in 1809, he said, "We have acted together from the origin to the end of a memorable revolution; and we have contributed, each in the line allotted to us, our endeavors to render its issues a permanent blessing to our country." — *Jefferson's Works*, i. 45.

Even after this victory, the Episcopal Church enjoyed certain endowments; and these restless

Baptists, allied with the Presbyterians, were not satisfied until through their joint endeavors this inconsistency was removed, as it was in 1802, when the glebe-lands were ordered to be sold. As Bishop Meade says, "The warfare begun by the Baptists, seven and twenty years before, was now finished. The Church was in ruins, and the triumph of her enemies was complete." They had indeed succeeded. They had secured the abolition of all ecclesiastical distinctions, and had wiped the last trace of spiritual tyranny from the old Commonwealth. But they had toiled for no exclusive privilege. What they won for themselves, they conceded to every Christian, every Jew, and every infidel, alike. The methods they adopted were frank and manly. They welcomed as allies the Presbyterians, or whoever else might sympathize with them; and they were animated by no sectarian spirit against the Episcopacy, but only demanded that it should stand, as other denominations, unsupported by law, upon the strength of its own merits.

Simultaneously with these efforts, and possibly encouraged by them in their earlier stages, a more general movement was inaugurated to secure for the whole country what was being so nobly won in Virginia. A general committee had been appointed in New England, of which Rev. Isaac Backus became the secretary in 1772, to whose management

the whole matter was committed. The secretary was active in this service. He collected facts, prepared and circulated petitions, and corresponded and travelled, for the promotion of this object.

Before the first Continental Congress at Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1774, the committee, with Mr. Backus as leader, presented themselves with a memorial, pleading for the protection “of the inalienable rights of conscience to all.” Here they encountered much opposition from the Massachusetts delegates, and even from Robert Treat Paine. Old John Adams replied to them, that “they might as well turn the heavenly bodies out of their annual and diurnal course, as to expect that they—in Massachusetts—would give up their Establishment.” Not in the least discouraged, the committee memorialized the Provincial Congress, and obtained the following response:—

“On reading the memorial of Rev. Isaac Backus, agent of the Baptist churches of this government, *Resolved*, That the establishment of civil and religious liberty to each denomination in the Province is the sincere wish of this Congress; but being by no means vested with the powers of civil government, whereby we can redress the grievances of any person whatsoever, they therefore recommend to the Baptist churches, that, when a general assembly shall be convened in this Colony, they lay the real

grievances of said churches before the same, when and where their petition will most certainly meet with all that attention due to the memorial of a denomination so well disposed to the public weal of their country. By order of Congress. — JOHN HANCOCK, *President*."

In 1787 the National Convention at Philadelphia completed its draft of a constitution, and referred it to the States for their adoption by their respective legislatures. It was adopted, but in Massachusetts by a majority of only nineteen votes, one of the chief objections being against the article which provided that no religious test shall be required as a qualification for office. While the Baptists favored the Constitution as a whole, they were dissatisfied with this last article, on the ground of its insufficiency to secure liberty of conscience to all people.

As a consequence, the Committee of Virginia determined to address Gen. Washington upon the subject; and in reply he assured them of "his readiness to use his influence to make these rights indisputable," and declared that "the Baptists had been the persevering promoters of the glorious Revolution." Their appeal was strengthened by remonstrances from other quarters, especially by the declarations of several States, such as Virginia, New Hampshire, and New York, that liberty of conscience should not be abridged, restrained, or modi-

fied. The effect of these representations is written in that Magna Charta of religious freedom, which, to her everlasting honor, was proposed by Virginia, and which became the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

In the course of time, some earlier, others later, each of the great commonwealths, with (according to *The Catholic Review*) the exception of New Hampshire, wheeled into line, and, by conforming their constitutions and laws to the doctrine of the general government, delivered the country from the withering blight of ecclesiastical favoritism and oppression.

Thus was the victory won upon these shores. The members of a despised and calumniated sect, few in numbers and poor in fortune, thus brought to public view those immortal principles which dignify humanity by placing each soul on terms of personal and independent commerce with the Almighty, and, by their unexampled labors and sacrifices, secured their recognition by the highest authority of the Republic.

I have not spoken at length of those who co-operated with them in this glorious task, nor of the influence of certain political events, such as the practical sympathy of Catholic France with the civil revolution, which, by abating sectarian prejudice,

moulded public opinion, and in no small degree facilitated the triumph of religious liberty. These aids, powerful and possibly absolutely necessary, should neither be overlooked nor undervalued; but, after every allowance has been made for their potency, the fact still remains, that the Baptists were the first, most consistent and persistent, advocates of this sacred cause, and that the amount of service they have performed in its behalf is so incalculable, that impartial posterity will not fail to honor them as the chiefest among earth's noblest benefactors.

A century has passed since the dawning of this long-hoped-for day. It has been a century of trials and of changes. The theories which were regarded by many, a hundred years ago, as visions and delusions, have been subjected to the searching test of experience. Predictions muttered by croakers and prejudiced judges have not been fulfilled. The abandonment of Christianity, which was foretold as a consequence of the separation of Church and State; the failure to support a gospel ministry, the increase of licentiousness, and the prevalence of impiety, which were inevitably to destroy us, — most happily have not been realized.

Instead of these evils, Christianity has continued to be revered; and her progress in these States is one of the marvels of the century. Her growth in

numbers is unprecedented, and the generousness of her gifts is unparalleled. She has founded and endowed magnificent seats of learning; she has favored and fostered an enlightened system of popular education; she has sanctioned and promoted the advancement of scientific inquiry; she has originated and cherished the noblest philanthropies; and she has established and sustained the sublimest missionary enterprises.

The fathers of liberty were not visionaries. They were men of rugged common sense; and, after a hundred years of trial, their great thought is not found wanting. Should we not, therefore, revere their memories? Should we not, also, bless our country, to whose patriotism and statesmanship the doctrine of soul-liberty is indebted for the fair, broad, open field it here enjoys, where its resources are developed, and its treasures are displayed, in absolute security? Had America bestowed upon her citizens no other boon than this, it alone would have entitled her to everlasting honor; and when, in the course of human events, her now waxing greatness shall wane, and the vicissitudes of fortune shall erase from the tablets of time the records of her most notable achievements, this one act shall survive all others, crowning her memory with immortal renown, and enshrining her name in the hearts of remotest generations.

“ Oh, sprung from earth’s first blood ! oh, tempest-nursed !
For thee what fates ? I know not. This I know : —
The soul’s great freedom-gift, of gifts the first,
Thou first on man in fulness didst bestow.
Hunted elsewhere, God’s Church with thee found rest :
Thy future hope is she, that queenly guest.”

The history of religious liberty is not completed. It is no dead issue. The past has but prepared the present to take up this cause, and carry it forward into the future. Édouard Laboulaye, in his work entitled “*La Liberté Religieuse*,” expresses the conviction, that “*La liberté religieuse, c’est la grande question de l’avenir*.” He is correct. Liberty cannot pause. Its blessings are too divine to be arrested on their march toward universal empire. It is the “question of the future.” Millions upon millions of our race have never heard of it ; or, if they have heard, do not possess it, and are merely hoping and praying for its presence. Millions who have acknowledged its sovereignty do not comprehend its nature, or perceive its bearings ; and thousands of these millions, we fear, are dead to its spirit, and are alive only to its letter, — condemning all persecution, and yet blind to the fact that the intolerance they cherish is persecution in the matrix, only waiting to be born.

For liberty in the coming years, golden words must be spoken, and golden deeds performed ;

triumphs won must be extended, positions gained must be defended, and suffering witnesses must be befriended. There are principles to be vindicated, problems to be solved, inconsistencies to be corrected, excesses to be restrained, and abuses to be remedied.

We should rejoice that no longer is the mission of liberty dependent on the zeal and courage of a few humble and despised disciples. It now gathers to its banner the enlightened Protestantism of America, and rallies to its support not only a considerable section of the same party in Europe, but also many of the wisest statesmen and philosophers of Christendom. Greater things should be done for liberty in the future than in the past; for the passion it engenders is as deep as in former times, and certainly it is more extended.

Among the many allies of the old cause, what should be the position of its earliest friends? Should they become followers where they have been leaders? Whither should they be impelled by their history? Whither should they be led by their spirit? What attitude should the Baptists assume and maintain, towards the varying aspects of religious liberty in this, and the approaching age?

These questions I desire to consider.

As we have already stated, toleration reigns in

England ; but this degree of freedom, far short as it is of what the people are entitled to, is not enjoyed by Continental nations, save in the scantiest measure, and secured by the most precarious of tenures.

A few years ago, its proclamation in Spain was celebrated by too-credulous Protestants with flourishes of drums and trumpets, with double-leaded newspaper leaders, and with eloquent predictions of a speedy-dawning millennium. But, in fact, the so-called religious liberty of the Peninsula never amounted to much. Never, excepting possibly the brief administration of Castelar, have those who dissent from Rome been free from some kind of molestation in that land of the Inquisition. And, within the past few months, the re-appearance of the Pope in the Basilica of St. Peter, to receive ten thousand Spanish pilgrims, was made by his Holiness the occasion of bitter lamentations that any degree of toleration had been conceded to his enemies ; and, though he could bewail what he regards as persecution on the part of the King of Italy towards his sacred person, he found it in his heart to denounce the few miserable privileges permitted to Protestants in Spain.

From present indications, his grief will not be of excessive duration ; for the party of re-action is in power, and each day fresh steps are being taken to abridge the constitutional rights of the anti-Roman-

ists. Already they are forbidden to announce their religious services in the newspapers, or to call the people to their churches by sabbath bells, or to open wide their sanctuary doors as an invitation for the spiritually weary to enter. Their schools are subject to Papal surveillance, foreign teachers are ostracized, and native converts are oppressed. These aggravations are doubtless preparing the way for more serious outrages. These too are being threatened. The Bishop of Minorca, in a circular to his clergy, pronounces anathemas on those who have any friendly intercourse with Protestants. Kind looks, as well as kind acts, are alike forbidden under pain of ecclesiastical censure. Such tyrannical decrees can only mean mischief.

The same spirit appears in other quarters. In France the clergy antagonize with the Republic; for the Republic means equal rights for Christians of every persuasion, and ultimately disestablishment. Efforts recently made in the French Chamber, to curtail the appropriations for ecclesiastical purposes, met with fierce and fiery resistance. Some notable speeches were made on that occasion in the interests of religious freedom; but the tone of the opposition was such as to leave the impression that its triumph cannot be secured without revolution. Various works upon the subject have excited considerable attention in France, — notably

those by Édouard Laboulaye and Jules Simon. The latter author sums up his review of the condition of religious liberty in Europe in these terms : “ Je conclus que la liberté de conscience est nouvelle, qu’elle est incomplète, même en France, et qu’elle est méconnue dans la moitié de l’Europe. Cependant, nous croyons la posséder. Nous ne sentons pas notre maladie, ce qui est la pire de toutes les maladies. Nous ne comprenons pas qu’il n’y a pas de liberté du dehors, pour qui ne possède pas la liberté du dedans.” — *La Liberté de Conscience*, p. 318. True it is, as he intimates, that many realize not their sickness ; but we rejoice that in France there are those who stand nobly forth, the champions of soul-liberty, and that there is a Baptist church in Paris, and members of the same faith scattered throughout the provinces, pledged to advocate every intelligent measure for its advancement.

In Mexico spiritual thralldom is the rule. Infamous outrages have there been wantonly committed against Protestants by the reigning faith. Indeed, wherever the Papacy has the power, in the New World or in the Old, it never hesitates to employ the most unjustifiable means for the extirpation of what it is pleased to regard as heresy. And what is more monstrous, an Englishman, Cardinal Manning, in the name of unity steps forth to justify this cruel policy. His recent extenuation of the Spanish

authorities is a masterpiece of special pleading, worthy an inquisitor of the fifteenth century, but unworthy an ecclesiastic of the nineteenth.

The Greek Church is governed by similar views; and, although lately she has been wringing her hands in well-simulated horror over the atrocities committed in Bulgaria, she has not abstained from violence against those of a purer faith than her own within the territory of Russia. If she would only present the spectacle of a weeping suppliant at the throne of the Czar, pleading for the liberty of conscience to which all dissidents are entitled, it would be as edifying a sight as it is improbable.

Alas that it should be improbable! Alas that even Protestant countries, such as Germany and Sweden, where national religious establishments reign, should be guilty of injustice towards the helpless thousands who cannot sustain their ecclesiastical authority! But so it is. The dominant Lutheran faith has but little sympathy with those who differ from it, however honestly. The spirit of Luther still tenants the house he founded; and much labor and many prayers will be required to exorcise it entirely.

This unhappy condition of things in Europe cannot long continue. The day is near, which shall prove a doomsday to spiritual tyranny. A struggle is impending. Exhausted by taxes to support an

aristocratic clergy, impatient of petty annoyances, and outraged by flagrant wrongs, the people long for deliverance. The example of America, the slowly dawning consciousness of their own strength and dignity, renders them restless and dissatisfied under the restraints of priestly masters, and must end in the most radical and beneficent of changes. By agitation and legislation they may seek to accomplish their purposes; but if these fail the power of revolution will not go untried. Law-abiding as the people of Europe may be, they have in the past recognized; and, very likely, will in the future recognize, a limit to submission. They may patiently endure to the utmost; but, when the utmost has been borne, they will spurn the favor and patronage of governments, conferred in ever so broad a toleration act, and with the strong hand of revolt wrest their inalienable rights.

Before such a storm, the millinery of ritualism would be torn to shreds, the sacramental mummeries of sacerdotalism and the superstitious solemnities of Jesuitism would be scathed and blasted. Priestly thrones would totter, priestly crosses be broken, priestly privileges be abolished, and possibly every trace of cruel hierarchies be obliterated.

God hasten the dawning of such a day! but God avert so sombre an evening from heralding the morning! We can pray for the new creation, but

not for the chaos ; for the glorious day over which “the sons of God will shout with joy,” but not for the terrible night, which, all too probably, must precede it. While we would not fan the smouldering fires of revolt, we should not be indifferent spectators of the evils which afflict our brethren in other lands ; we should not retire from the conflict ; we should not close our ears to the cry of the oppressed, nor shut our eyes to their necessities.

Oliver Cromwell shook his clinched mailed hand in the face of Catholic Europe when the hunted Vaudois were threatened with extermination ; Milton excited the sympathy of millions in their behalf, by his touching ode, —

“ Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints ! ”

and Geneva could find a refuge for them, where the wanderers could securely rest. While it is not for the friends of religious liberty in America to threaten like Cromwell, it is at least their duty to imitate Milton in shaping public sentiment through the agency of the printed page. They can also offer in this land shelter and protection to all who desire deliverance from tyranny. And, what is better still, out of their abundance these Christian freemen can contribute towards the support of Protestant pastors, and the founding of Protestant schools and churches in Europe. Certainly, with honor to themselves,

the Baptists can do no less; and I am thankful that they have not failed to attempt as much. By their missions in Italy, Sweden, Germany, Greece, and Spain, they have already planted the seeds of religious liberty; and it is incredible, that, through a mistaken economy, they should leave them to perish in the soil.

Jules Simon has expressed the sentiment, that "Liberty is never safe." Her enemies are always vigilant and active, always energetic and untiring in their efforts to accomplish her destruction. They are as much in earnest in America as in any other country. Religious liberty is no more attractive to them beneath our skies, than it is beneath the sunnier skies of Italy. If we would discover these persistent foes, they are to be found grouped around the banner of the Papacy.

Some genial souls imagine that the Romish Church has been softened into forbearance and charity by republican institutions. This is a delusion. The tigress is only caged. Her nature remains unchanged. What ecclesiastics accepted the dogma of infallibility with more alacrity than did those of the United States? Where in the ranks of the Catholic clergy can firmer advocates be found, than in this land, of the infamous doctrine that thought on religious subjects should be regu-

lated by the priesthood? Here, as in Europe, they may submit to uncontrollable circumstances; but neither here nor there have they abandoned the war against soul-liberty. If the Catholic clergy of America believe the infallibility of the pope, then must they believe, what he has declared, "that religious liberty and freedom of the press are delirious ravings;" and, if they believe this, in very consistency, they must employ every means to arrest them.

Should these ecclesiastics assure us that our suspicions are unfounded, we could not believe them, because it is a part of their avowed creed to keep no faith with Protestants. Moreover, the attitude of the Papacy is of such a kind as to awaken most serious apprehension. Its devoted sons have obtained, from state and municipal authorities, large and valuable grants of land; they have also secured extraordinary immunities; and, to advance still further their own interests, they are tampering with political parties, are aiming to control legislation, and are seeking to break up and destroy our educational system.

These movements are but means to an end. They are steps leading to the recognition of Romanism as the established religion of these States. Though the scheme may appear visionary and wild, it can be matched by others, in the past, seemingly as hopeless,

which have succeeded. Nothing is really impossible to the determined, who through years steadily pursue a definite plan ; and no class of men are more fully consecrated to a single aim than the Catholic clergy. If they abolish our public schools, if they can obtain immense possessions, and political supremacy at the ballot, what is to hinder them at last from making their Church national in name, as it will be in fact ?

The danger must not be ignored. I would not encourage the least unfairness towards our Catholic fellow-citizens. The rights secured to them by the first constitutional amendment, should be respected. Their interests before the law, should be equally sacred with our own. But the Church of which they are members will bear watching, and she should be watched. There should be no division of the school funds to satisfy her demands, and no special grants of land to win her political support. It is for the Protestant party of America to resist such measures, as it is its duty to check this growing power, by keeping itself apart from Romish mummeries, and by withholding patronage from Romish seminaries.

Upon the Baptists, in common with others, this obligation rests. They are the ancient enemies of the Papacy, and, from the Scripturalness of their faith, are the best qualified to resist its encroach-

ments. Their mission is peculiarly identified with the interests of freedom; and they should not regard it as accomplished while such a foe, with such a front, remains upon our shores. As well talk to the wise general, that he has done every thing, when his troops, flushed with victory, occupy a field which the beaten foe is bound to re-possess, and towards which by secret passes and circuitous routes he is bringing up his forces. Such an officer rejoices at his peril: to give himself, in self-confident security, to repose would be madness. And little short of madness will it prove for Baptists and the mighty Protestant party of America, to engross themselves in business, to steep their souls in apathy, while Rome with untiring energy and subtle pleading is sapping the foundation of their liberties. O Samson! if thou art asleep in the Delilah-lap of luxurious ease, if thy strong arms have been bound with withes, up, oh! up, for the Philistines are upon thee!

It is intimated in various quarters, that the cause of religious liberty in this country is being as much imperilled by its professed friends, as by its undisguised foes. The particular ground for this charge, is the presence and use of the Bible in the public schools. It is regarded by Romanists, and by infidels, as a violation of the First Constitutional Amendment, that the Scriptures by public authority

should be read in the hearing of scholars, whose parents cannot subscribe to its inspiration, nor acknowledge that the text of the original has been faithfully rendered, nor admit that it should be studied without the aid of a priestly interpreter. The fact that a large proportion of the Evangelical party are in favor of this custom, is brought forward as evidence of their insincerity in glorifying religious liberty.

This assumption, I am satisfied, is entirely gratuitous. With Protestants the vexed question does not take the shape of an expedient for the proselyting of Catholics, or, in any way, for the special furtherance of their own faith. Such thoughts are very far from their minds. They mean to wrong no man; and, consequently, they have manifested a disposition to harmonize in any practical way the conflict of opinions upon this subject. Very many of them have been so sensitive to the imputation of persecution, that they have even expressed themselves willing to yield the point to their adversaries. And, as for the Baptists, although they love the Bible, and would gladly see it wherever it makes a place for itself, they could not be induced to do anything that would look like forcing its authority on the people, either by unequal law, or by the specious plea of the right of the majority to rule. So thoroughly is this principle ingrained in their nature,

that it is exceedingly problematical whether they could be persuaded to give a decisive vote, North or South, for the retention of the Bible in the schools. As they neither regard their own existence nor that of Christianity involved in the issue, they are more than ready to deal, with those who differ from them, as they would be done by. No sectarian prejudice, no sectarian interest warps their judgment. No alarms for the future impel them to deal unfairly. They do not apprehend dire calamities, even should the enemies of the Scriptures carry their measures. Christianity has had its mournful friends in every age, — men who have heard in every change the knell of doom; but Baptists as a people are not of this number. It has survived persecution, scientific discoveries, and infidel ravings, — yea, it has survived the obscuration of the Bible in dead languages as well as legal prohibition; and its life surely cannot now depend on the retention of the Book of books in primary educational establishments.

Personally, I should dislike exceedingly any change in the prevailing custom. Yet, if I thought the demand a just one, though made by those who have no claim upon our consideration, I would not hesitate to advocate that the voice of God's word be hushed where our children gather to receive instruction. But wherein lies the wrong? where

the outrage? The position of the Bible in the schools is not the result of any union between Protestants and the State; nor was it secured by the political action of one denomination, or of all combined. The Church, as such, did not put it there, and the Church, as such, cannot take it away. A profound reverence for its teachings, a hearty confidence in its inspiration, impelled the people in the various States and municipalities of our country to place it where the young might hear its precepts. Unquestionably, they had a constitutional right to regulate the matter through their school boards. A similar right is now claimed by some Catholics and infidels, in common with some Protestants, to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors; and, what is more, such enactments have been recognized as lawful by those, who are qualified by judicial learning to express an opinion.

The preservation of morals, or their purification, on which so largely rest the material interests of commonwealths, lies at the foundation of both pleas; and their unsoundness has never yet been demonstrated. Whether it will be in the future, or not, remains to be seen; but, whatever the decision, the Church is not responsible. This I would have my readers fully understand, that they may perceive, in view of the facts, how utterly groundless the charges of persecution are.

In this connection, I desire to submit a few thoughts, which, in my judgment, should influence the people to remain satisfied with existing arrangements.

It should be remembered that the priests are leading in this agitation; not because they advocate the principle that a little religion in primary education is an evil, but because they seek by these means to break up what they call our secular system of instruction altogether, that they may, through the establishment of Papal schools, sustained by public funds, be enabled to impart sectarian teachings. They would shut out the light of true, clear, shining knowledge, and obscure the mind of the rising generation with the ecclesiastical fog, which for ages has enveloped the common people of Spain and Italy. I confess to an indisposition to subscribe to this programme; for this reason, among many others, that the priests are not the parties primarily responsible, either by nature or law, for the training of children. This issue mainly concerns parents; and, as the doctrine of celibacy excludes priests from this rôle, they should not be permitted to shape the nation's policy on a subject so vital to its welfare. When the Catholics of the United States declare that the presence of the Bible in the schools is an outrage, and that as parents, as citizens, — not Catholics, — their conscience is aggrieved, then the question will

assume a slightly different phase. But, we are told, that the priests say their parishioners are being outraged. Mark, the *priests* say this: those for whom they speak never have said it. If it shall be answered, "The priests are the voice of their people," we cannot admit the plea; for in a free government every man must be his own voice. The people have not spoken. Instead of such a protest, they send their children to the public schools, unless restrained by ecclesiastics. They seem satisfied with present arrangements, convinced that no perversion of their children's faith is attempted by those who have them in charge.

Another consideration which should weigh with the voters of America, in coming to a final decision, is the unexampled beneficial influence the study of the Bible has upon all, especially upon the young. The history of the race during many weary years is exclusively recorded there; the views of some of the wisest, and best of men on morals are there expressed; the relation of God to law is there unfolded; and some of the loftiest types of heroism, and the grandest sentiments of piety are there presented. Understanding, imagination, and affection alike are cultivated by its pages. While the children should not be forced to receive these writings as from God, — even were such a thing possible, — they should not be kept in ignorance of them. The

evidences of their claims to divine origin may well be left for future, and individual investigation; but their teachings should be mastered. The pupil may be left free to accept or reject their inspiration; but he should not be free to remain in ignorance of their contents.

If, however, it should be objected that their study might bias the mind of the child in favor of their loftiest pretensions, and on that account should be forbidden; then, on similar grounds, might Christians object to instruction in physical science. It is generally understood, that the drift of this study is towards materialism in its baldest form, and towards the doctrines of necessity and atheism. The very primary lessons of geology, as usually unfolded, appear contrary to the Mosaic history of creation. But on this account, we should not desire to have its study abandoned, either in academy or seminary. No: no man's education can be counted thorough, apart from the information it conveys, and discipline of mind it imparts. If it should shake a boy's confidence in the Bible, we would regret it; but he must encounter the peril. For the peril's sake I dare not say to him, "Be ignorant of the progress of modern thought." In every blessing lurks a danger. Freedom may run into licentiousness: shall I forbid freedom? Pleasure may lead to vice: shall I proscribe pleasure? Investigation may lead

to error: shall I denounce investigation? So science may lead to infidelity, and the Bible to Christian faith; but would not an interdict on either, because of what should be regarded by parents as the peril, be a fearful outrage and an invasion of the scholar's liberty?

In his autobiography, (a melancholy book,) John Stuart Mill says, "I was brought up, from the first, without any religious belief in the ordinary sense of the term. It would have been wholly inconsistent with my father's idea of duty, to *allow me* to acquire impressions contrary to his convictions and feelings respecting religion." And this, I am persuaded, is the narrow spirit that dictates in infidel quarters their opposition to the Scriptures in education. We cannot yield to it in them, nor encourage it in ourselves; but most heartily must plead, in the name of liberty, that the doors be open to the young, that they may enter at will the storehouses both of Scripture and science, leaving the consequences to their own intellect and conscience, and the good providence of God.

A small, but somewhat influential class of agitators, are announcing another peril to religious liberty, which they believe they have discovered in the legal provisions exempting from taxation property held for ecclesiastical, educational, and philanthropical enterprises. They allege that such

exemption is unfair towards the persons, who have no sympathy with the objects represented by these various interests, and in reality is an indirect method of taxing them for their support. They also profess to see in this privilege a practical alliance between Church and State, which in coming years may lead to more serious abuses. Visions of ecclesiastical bodies and religious corporations, grown corrupt and tyrannical through the influence of unbounded earthly possessions, chronically haunt these alarmists, and disturb the serenity of their mind. Their fervid imagination pictures a future for the United States, in which a spiritual despotism is the central figure, with dungeons, proscriptions, and possibly martyrdoms, as its sombre and mournful surroundings.

In my judgment, there is no real ground for this alarm. These visions are not born of inspiration, but of a species of nightmare. So far as they are infidel in origin, their aim undoubtedly is to embarrass Christian progress; so far as they are Protestant, they seem to be born of a desire to curb the material prosperity of Romanism; and in neither case is there proof furnished that either party is actuated by the higher motive which they both so persistently avow. On the other hand, there are cogent reasons why the nation should not adopt the narrow policy, which these agitators advocate with so much zeal.

One of the strongest pleas in support of the church-taxation theory is found in the statement, that exemption means a contribution from the State for the maintenance of religion. This, it is claimed, is utterly irreconcilable with the American doctrine of absolute separation of civil government from ecclesiastical institutions. But the fallacy of the argument can readily be perceived by reversing it. If a tax is levied on the church-edifice, religion is required by the act to pay tribute to the State. Or in the case of buildings and appliances devoted to education, if they are taxed, the value being estimated by the cost, then education is made to care for the pecuniary necessities of government. But this is as much a perversion of the American idea of separation, if we are to receive it as interpreted by the advocates of such measures, as exemption itself. If it is true, as they declare and we believe, that the two domains should be held rigidly apart, then the only practical consistent plan is the one now in operation ; for it requires neither Church nor State to pay tribute to the other. They are left, as they should be. independent of each other, and in the best position for their mutual prosperity.

It should also be remembered, that the lands and buildings held in the interests of religion or education, are not property in the commercial sense of the word. They do not represent material productive

values. The church-edifice, set apart to spiritual labors, represents no tangible material assets. As far as pecuniary returns are concerned, there are none; for such a building has withdrawn from the community the precise amount of capital which it cost, and henceforth it yields no profits in kind. Commercially the capital is dead, is no longer available. It is customary to estimate property by its actual or potential material income. Valuations can only thus be regulated. But meeting-houses and school-buildings are not revenue-producing property, and cannot, therefore, be equitably taxed with other property for the support of government. Though it cost money, it has ceased to possess money value, and is worthless to the community, except in the spiritual revenue it yields. And how shall the state proceed to levy a money tax upon spiritual values?

There is another principle governing taxation, which the non-exemptionists appear to overlook. Political economists have shown that there is nothing in the nature of such levies, which requires that every earthly interest should bear part of the burden. At best, they are but expedients adopted to meet general and specific wants of the government, which should be imposed in the least onerous manner, and which should be exacted only where they will work least detriment to the common weal.

In harmony with this view, it is admitted that things least necessary, and things of doubtful benefit, should be made to bear the heaviest burden. Accordingly, intoxicating liquors, tobacco, and luxuries, as silks and laces, in their order are first assessed for revenue purposes ; and, after them, other and more needful things, if demanded by public exigencies, and then, as lightly as possible. But what is more requisite and indispensable to a nation than that which church and educational property yields ? What is of more importance to the community than the object to which it is devoted ? This is nothing less than the formation of character ; and character is the glory and security of States. Academies, colleges, are consecrated to the training of the mind, and the development of its resources ; while churches are engaged in the grander work of perfecting its morals, and quickening its spiritual aspirations. They are means by which the race is preserved from rankest materialism, and from a rapid retrogression towards the Darwinian ape-ideal.

This work the State cannot do directly, by bare authority. Character cannot be enacted by law ; legislation cannot call it into existence ; proclamations cannot fashion it ; no police force can regulate it, and no army win its glories. From what source, then, must it come ? It cannot be dispensed with : it is a quality more important to government than

all the material value of its territory. How is it to be attained ?

Evidently it can only be furnished by the citizens themselves, through the medium of their educational and religious establishments. But shall the State come in and weaken her own life by insisting on a tax from churches and institutions of learning, which must tend to paralyze benevolence, and discourage its efforts ? When no eternal principle of right is involved in the tax, and when it may go far to repress the ardor of those who are engaged in labor which is actually vital to the welfare of the commonwealth, shall its civil authorities impose unnecessary burdens upon the sources of its higher life ? Better sacrifice any material gain, than do aught to jeopardize the moral and intellectual development of the nation.

What ! is America so poor, that to provide a revenue she must condescend to ask a contribution from the funds of charity towards her support ? Is she so bankrupt that the means donated by benevolence to rescue her neglected children from evil, to shield her helpless sons and daughters from starvation, and to save her entire citizenship from immorality and animalism, must be taxed to sustain her material splendor ? Surely she is not so necessitous, nor so blind to her real grandeur, as to countenance such spoliation.

From time immemorial, it has been counted one of the chief glories of states to foster the arts and sciences, promote culture, and encourage genius. Such an enlightened policy has rendered the names of Athens, Rome, Constantinople, Florence, Paris, and other ancient cities, forever famous. Can it be, that in this nineteenth century, the world is to behold the sad spectacle of a nation so utterly materialized as to have no sympathy with all that tends to refine and elevate? Can it be that America should ever covet the shame of laying an embargo on intellectual expansion and moral progress, when all other civilized nations are doing what they can to quicken them? Were she called upon to foster art and philanthropy at great pecuniary cost to herself, some excuse might be framed for her refusal; but as she is simply requested not to hinder, not to impede their development, for her to refuse, would be to incur indelible reproach.

As well might the eagle rend and tear the pinions of her eaglets, thus dooming them to a life among misty valleys, when they might have soared and held communion with the skies, as for America, whose symbol the eagle is, to maim her people by discouraging that culture, which as wings is fitted to bear them to purer regions than politics or the mere secularities of life can furnish.

I cannot believe that counsels so ignoble will pre-

vail. I cannot think that the citizens of America will ever sanction the adoption of a policy so narrow. They must ultimately realize that the jealousy for liberty, which its advocates avow, is gratuitous and needless, and that the exemption of church and educational property from taxation can never compromise its integrity, nor endanger its existence.

The doctrine enunciated by the Baptists, the progress of which I have tried historically to trace in these pages, has exclusively to do with the relations which should exist between Church and State. It goes no farther than to define, bound, and limit the extent of their mutual independence. Here it terminates; and here it might be left, but for the fact that for half a century or longer, and especially in our day, efforts have been made to give it a wider, and, in some cases, a misleading application.

It is now claimed by not a few Christian brethren, that religious liberty should reign as absolutely inside of a church organization, as in her outward relations. In Dr. Channing's time the singular position was maintained, on the part of certain dissidents, that they had as much right to recognition and standing within Congregational churches since their abandonment of evangelical views as before. This assumption was met by Prof. Moses Stuart, and some remarkable letters were pub-

lished on both sides of the controversy. A similar claim is put forth to-day, by those who do not agree with all the teachings of the denominations of which they are members; and it is a matter of interesting inquiry, to ascertain how far such a claim should be countenanced, and in what manner, the brethren who make it should be treated. Having voluntarily entered into engagements with others, which voluntarily they can terminate, are they warranted, by any fair construction of the doctrine of liberty, to demand the privileges of their position if they disregard their obligations? and, if they are not, how should they be dealt with?

The importance of this inquiry is possibly greater, than at first may appear to my readers. There is a tendency, more wide-spread than is generally supposed, to complain that articles of faith cramp intellectual liberty, and that the laws and rules of religious communities restrict unduly inclination and action. In the name of liberty, latitudinarianism is exalted; in its name, disorder is encouraged; in its name, fixity is unfixed, and the solidities of Christian societies reduced to a state of flux. A restless spirit has invaded the peaceful realms of wholesome government; and, growing more restless, it drives wildly against things appointed, and seems to be on the eve of proclaiming the anarchic doctrine, that no power to appoint should exist anywhere.

This evil is not confined to any particular denomination. It shows itself among the Presbyterians and Episcopalians, as distinctly as among the Congregationalists and Baptists. The English Church is not free from the growth of what her articles condemn as heresies; and the American arm of that body is not in a perfectly sound condition. Among her members in the Old Country, and in this, a great diversity of opinion exists regarding the interpretation of the creed, the position and efficacy of rites and ceremonies, and the dignities and authority of ecclesiastics. Pædobaptists of other names have their own internal troubles: on the side of the laity, they perceive the practice of infant-baptism rapidly falling into desuetude, and, on the side of the clergy, an increasing drift towards an attenuated orthodoxy. In common with their brethren of the Baptist faith, they experience how difficult it is to restrain and control the ambition of struggling leaders, and how hard it is to maintain any thing like order and continuity in the life of a Christian community.

Among the Baptists these evils may have been magnified by their opponents; but they are vigorous enough to cause disquiet and annoyance. Less excusable though they are in a denomination, where the republican theory of church government is sometimes carried to an extreme irreconcilable with

order, they have obtained an unpromising degree of strength. Some of its preachers, in the name of liberty, ridicule doctrines they pledged themselves to support, and reply to remonstrances against their course in terms foul with the charges of bigotry and sectarianism; and others, who have never known the weight of spiritual manacles, conceive that they are called of God to be the apostles of a freedom, which, in its last analysis, is only a form of irresponsible insubordination.

This tendency to set at defiance law and order, to encourage looseness in faith and practice, fills the majority of Christian people with distress and apprehension. They have in them a deep sense of the need of ecclesiastical, as well as of social order. There is a notion in their minds, that the structural necessities of religious societies demand, equally with those of a secular character, some definite authority, some definite rights and duties, and some definite limitations to forbearance. They cannot bring themselves to believe that liberty means that there should be no authority in Israel, and that every man should do what is right in his own eyes, without regard to the welfare of the community in which he lives.

To my way of thinking, they are correct; for the sentiments of the latitudinarian are pernicious, and can only result in dire calamity to Christendom.

The interests of law are no less sacred than the interests of liberty; for law is the guaranty of liberty, not its enemy; and liberty, if it would guard its own honor, must ever be the enthusiastic friend of law. Each of them rests upon an ultimate fact which is divine, — liberty, on the majesty and greatness of the individual conscience; law, on the fact of our God-given social instincts, and, as a consequence, on the divine origin of the Church. And there is an inevitable necessity of upholding and protecting the Church by law against caprice or passion. To depreciate, insult, or overthrow law, in the name of liberty, must sooner or later end in licentiousness and ruin, in whatever domain of life the unholy mission is undertaken.

Thomas Carlyle expresses some sober thoughts upon this subject, which are as applicable to the Church as to the State. “Disorder,” he says, “is a thing which veracious created nature, even because it is not chaos and a waste-whirling baseless phantasm,” rejects and disowns. “Disorder,” he exclaims, “insane by the nature of it, is the hatefulest of things to man, who lives by sanity and order.” “All anarchy, all evil, all injustice, is by the nature of it, suicidal, and cannot endure.” “Arrangement is necessary to man; arrangement, were it grounded only on that old primary evangel Force, with sceptre in the shape of hammer.” So wrote

Southey, testifying that "order is the sanity of the mind, the health of the body, the peace of the city, the security of the state." And Richard Hooker, with a stately eloquence, most admired by the most admirable masters of English prose, at the close of his first book on Ecclesiastical Polity, bears similar testimony in these words: "Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

If the convictions of these men are worthy our attention, if their views are entitled to our respect, then we must admit, that serious disorder countenanced by the Church must prove the prelude of her destruction. How long, think you, would benevolent associations, scientific circles, and educational societies endure, and continue their usefulness, were they to approve or tolerate its reign? And what aspect would our country present to the world, were her constitution ignored, her laws disregarded, and their administration neglected? Such abuses would speedily transform her into the likeness of the

stormy republic of Greece, that meteor of liberty, which shot athwart the heavens, dazzled, and exploded. Like ancient Rome she would be cursed with the despotism of mobs, the corruption of demagogues, the ostracism of justice; she would be destroyed by patrician arrogance, plebeian madness, tribunal storms, unending factions, and perpetual wars.

Surely definite government, settled order, must be as needful to a spiritual community, whose purpose it is to maintain truth and righteousness, oppose error and wickedness, while it toils to secure the salvation of the race. God has warranted this opinion by imparting to the Church in his word the form of her organization, the principles and rules of her administration, and the ordinances by which she is to be made distinctively Christian before men. He who called her into being, has invested her spirit with a body as tangible and palpable as that with which he clothed at first the immortal soul. In such a world as this, a disembodied man or woman would be powerless; and equally powerless to wage her warfare against sin, and to subdue the sinner to Christ, must every church be that commits the suicidal folly of maiming or destroying the form which God has given her.

And now, in what temper, and after what manner, should they be dealt with, whose influence lies in

the direction of such dissent, confusion, and disintegration? How should a majority of any church, holding faithfully to its doctrines and practices, treat those brethren who are constrained to differ from them? Clearly, they should not be indifferent to what is going on around them. To fold their arms apathetically, and take no thought for the honor of God's truth or the dignity of God's ordinances, does not comport with any just conception of Christian obligation. They must do one thing or the other: they must either check these inroads, or abandon the Church to lawlessness of one kind or another. If they are unwilling to incur the guilt involved in a course so pusillanimous, how shall they proceed, that, in maintaining the sacredness of God's revealed will, they may not entirely disregard the sacredness of a brother's conscience?

Unquestionably they would not be warranted in proscribing the spirit of investigation. It is not Protestant, but papal, to forbid free and unlimited inquiry. A profession of religion does not terminate a man's duty to search for truth. No progress can be made in knowledge, unless its treasures are ardently sought. To condemn investigation, is to paralyze intellect; yea, it is to affirm that there is nothing more to learn, or nothing more worth learning, from the Sacred Scriptures: it is to assume that the spiritual universe has no new facts to yield in response to the painstaking of the patient inquirer.

The Baptists have never proceeded on suppositions so untenable. They have ever stood forth the champions of untrammelled intellect, — of liberty of search, and liberty of speech everywhere. The creed which symbolizes their views, is not their Bible. Their definitions and formulas, are the growth of centuries. They have been modified again and again, while the truths which they represent have been substantially preserved; and, were they to be recast to-day, the light which has been thrown upon theology by natural science and Biblical criticism, would modify them yet again. The Bible is a fixed quantity, nature is a fixed quantity; but theology and science are not. They are unfixed, changing and changeable. By recognizing this fact, and acting upon it, Baptists have delivered themselves from Antinomian as well as from other errors, and from an anti-missionary spirit. They cannot, therefore, consistently with their past, denounce the aggressive spirit of inquiry in the present. Nor, is there any reason to believe that they are disposed to adopt so narrow a policy. They still say to each other, "Search, think, study; leave no effort untried to ascertain the mind of the Spirit on all subjects pertaining to life and godliness."

While Protestantism very generally encourages this enlightened and enlightening spirit, those who are moved by it to strenuous endeavor should not

forget, as they avail themselves of their right, that its exercise has never been child's play, and never will be. On the whole, it is rather rugged business, and not such business as the sensitive and timid should engage in. It is no field for carpet-knights, no work for the self-conceited. New opinions cannot be proclaimed without inviting criticism, and the sharpest scrutiny. They shock conservatism and settled convictions, and necessarily excite antagonism. Thoughtful men, will not abandon long-cherished views without a struggle. And, consequently, the man who ventures to broach a novel doctrine, must possess his soul in patience, and must be prepared to make a way for it at the cost of personal ease and peace. He will never succeed in gaining a place for it among the received teachings of the Church, by fretfulness or denunciation. Manfully must he bear himself in a manly conflict. For him to weep over the so-viewed prejudices of his brethren, who cannot be convinced by mere assertions, is to make himself ridiculous. And for him to meet the sharpness of inevitable resistance with vituperation, or for him to cry bigotry, because a whole denomination cannot see as he does, is to be guilty of the very bigotry which he charges upon others.

Let us now suppose an unfortunate case,—that some of those who ardently investigate are led to embrace conclusions diametrically opposed to

the teachings of the organization of which they are members, and which naturally tend towards its utter overthrow: can their duty under the circumstances, or that of their associates, be at all problematical? If they have fallen into infidelity, or free religion, or, Unitarianism, their views, however honestly held, can no more be tolerated in evangelical churches, than can allegiance to the monarchical principle of government be maintained harmoniously with allegiance to republican institutions. The man who is a loyal citizen of America, cannot, at the same time, be a loyal citizen of England. And no more could an unbeliever consistently maintain, or be encouraged to maintain, his relations with a church. In the nature of things, there must be a separation. For the Church to countenance his infidelity, would be fatal to her own existence; and for him to be willing to continue in membership with her, would be ruinous to his own character. If neither can honorably indorse the other, they abide no longer in real fellowship; and, the sooner the nominal connection is severed, the better for the integrity of both. While the dissident should see that it is effected at once, if he fails to pursue the only honorable course open to him, the Church in self-defence must employ the instrument of excision. And if she should do so, his liberty would not be violated; for liberty does not mean the right to force her to sustain what she repudiates: that were tyranny.

But, investigation, happily, does not frequently lead to such radical changes in the views of ministers or laymen. If, however, it results in modifications of their belief, which, though they do not harmonize with the doctrines or practices of the Church, do not obscure her essential character, nor subvert her organic integrity, what course should she take? Should she cut them off? Should she thrust them forth from her membership? Or should she exercise towards them a generous though qualified toleration? The latter course is the one I most heartily approve; and, when it is at all practicable, it is the one most commonly pursued by the Baptist denomination.

Unquestionably there are among the Baptists, as among other religious people, those who seem to be constitutionally averse to the exercise of toleration. They prefer the more direct process of summary decapitation. It is difficult for them to make allowances for variations in belief from accepted standards. Possibly, they have never thought much on their own account, and so cannot appreciate those who must settle all questions for themselves, and who cannot readily yield allegiance to the traditions of the Fathers.

Such brethren, make broad their phylacteries in the presence of dissent. God's fair pasture-land, where weak ones of the flock may feed side by side

with the strong, they convert into a dry, stony plain, where few, even of the strongest, can find spiritual herbage. The heritage of the saints on earth, they change into a sombre pine-wood, in whose frowning shadow no other species of the heavenly plant, than that which they approve, is permitted to take root. Just as primroses cannot grow in a pine-forest, just as its dark aisles are never lighted by starry anemones, and just as blue-bells and forget-me-nots cannot spread among its brown needles and empty cones the azure reflection of a little heaven below, so forbearance, tenderness, gentleness, charity, have no scope for their growth, no congenial soil for their roots, in the sunless intolerance of these brethren.

Were their advice generally followed, and their example commonly imitated, Christendom would be forced into as many divisions as there are shades of belief. Under such circumstances, the prayer of the Free Kirk minister, offered in Scotland not many years ago, “that all might be baptized into the spirit of disruption,” would receive a too literal response. Surely we have sects in sufficient number. It cannot be necessary to increase them; and it cannot be best for the interests of religion, to found a church upon every shade of opinion, or difference in practice, which obtains among Christians. There must be some place for toleration; but, if we invariably

separate from those who differ from us, we leave no room for its exercise, unless, as some brethren do, we condescend to tolerate those who do *not* dissent from our convictions regarding truth and duty.

Fénelon once said, “*Accordez à tous la tolérance, non pas en approuvant tout comme indifférent, mais en souffrant avec patience ce que Dieu souffre ;*” and something of this spirit, I am satisfied, must prevail in the churches of all denominations, unless we would see the evils of sectarianism indefinitely multiplied.

I have said that toleration should be qualified. Unless it is, it will probably run into latitudinarianism or indifference. But here I confess a difficulty. In what terms shall its boundaries be prescribed? How shall its limitations be defined? Possibly they can never be absolutely determined. Dissidence varies so materially in its character, the circumstances which surround it are so diverse, the spirit which animates it is so different in different individuals, that it does not seem practicable to lay down unchangeable rules for its uniform treatment. No set of regulations on the subject, can be applicable to all cases. The spirit of toleration must be left to work out its own manifestations ; and these will always be influenced by the peculiarities of its surroundings, and by the occasion which seems to call for its exhibition.

While I recognize the force of this difficulty, and while I cannot hope to obviate it by any thing I may write, a few general principles, suggested mainly by the usual practice of that denomination, whose history is so fully identified with the progress of liberty, may not be altogether useless. They may at least serve to show how, in ordinary cases, toleration can be exercised compatibly with personal integrity and the interests of good government.

When one differs from his brethren on some non-vital point of doctrine, such as the order of conversion, the time or nature of the second advent, the extent of the atonement, he is not to be restrained in its proclamation. Among the Baptists, various opinions exist upon these subjects. Some of them are old school Calvinists, others are new school; some believe that faith precedes repentance, others that repentance precedes faith; some ardently advocate the pre-millennial doctrine, while others as ardently deny it. But, as all agree to the reality of the atonement, the need of efficacious grace to save, the supernaturalness of conversion, and to the certain coming of Christ at last in judgment, they tolerate each other's differences, and permit no breach in their fellowship. Should one or the other of these parties be dissatisfied with the arrangement, and insist that his views become the standard of orthodoxy, a conflict would occur which could

only end in new compromises, or in separation. If such an agitator, should be led by his fiery zeal to denounce as narrow bigots those who cannot subscribe to his notions, he would simply be transgressing the bounds of his own liberty, and in spirit would be violating that of others. In such a case, toleration would cease to be commendable.

A brother, in the course of his life, may embrace a peculiar sentiment, which, if generally adopted, would materially affect the Church in the sphere of practice, modifying her government, and possibly, her ordinances. While neither hiding nor denying his convictions, he may, for reasons satisfactory to his own conscience, be perfectly willing to conform to the requirements of the body in which he has membership. If he holds what he believes as a private opinion, holds it unobtrusively and kindly, no one, in the name of uniformity, should wage a warfare against him, or disturb him in the enjoyment of his personal right. For instance, if he regards democratic church government as unscriptural, and favors the hierarchical form, it is for him to decide how far his conscience will permit him to live under the first while believing the divine authority of the second. He must decide on his own course of conduct. Certainly so long as Baptists are not expected to indorse his theories, and he submits to their practice, they can have no controversy with

him. So long as they are not called upon to violate their own convictions, or act inconsistently with their faith on the subject, they can afford to pass unnoticed his innoxious dissent. But, should the innovator insist that the entire body shall make his theory their practice, then unless they are prepared to abandon their cherished doctrine, a collision of consciences will be unavoidable. If his conscience demands the recognition of what his brethren cannot conscientiously but regard as erroneous, toleration is at an end: one or the other of the disputants must conform, or they must separate. The time will have come for the adoption of that course, which was pointed out many centuries ago by an old man, who said to his brethren in a season of heated controversy, "Let us agree as far as we can; and, where we cannot agree, in God's name let us agree to differ." But, if he will not yield to such an admonition, then must the Church heed the apostolic direction to "mark, or avoid those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine of Christ;" and she can only do this by rigidly enforcing her discipline.

This principle is substantially followed by Baptist churches, in their dealings with those who profess what are known as open-communion sentiments. In the United States, they maintain, with singular unanimity the doctrine that the Lord's Supper is

an ordinance committed to the care of a local church, and should be administered exclusively to its members. Wide-spread differences of opinion obtain among the brethren, regarding the degree of rigidity with which the laws of its administration should be enforced ; but only a few, comparatively, dissent from the doctrine itself. Some believe that no invitation to partake of the elements should be given at all, to any one ; others maintain that members of sister Baptist bodies should be invited : some deny the right of immersed disciples of other congregations to a seat with them ; while not a few as ardently contend, that believers who have submitted to this ordinance should be welcome, come they from any denomination whatever. There are those who would withhold the bread and the wine from a Pædobaptist brother, who might be in attendance on the service ; and there are those who would administer them to him, or pass them to him if he were near them, believing that all responsibility in the case must be left with the recipient. These variations have, doubtless, deepened the impression, that has of late been industriously made, that the denomination is on the eve of abolishing all restrictions to the Lord's Supper. But such is not the case : they only indicate the spirit of mutual consideration and forbearance which distinguishes the Baptists in the interpretation of these restrictions ; they are but signs

of a charity which makes allowances, and does not expect exact conformity in details and particulars.

It is notable, also, that this charity is not withheld even from those who, though members of Baptist churches, deny the scripturalness of close communion. There is a wide-spread desire in the denomination, to bear with them as far as possible, and not to proceed to extremes with them, unless no other course is open. Doubtless, among the two million regular Baptists in America, there are several hundred, possibly several thousand, open-unionists, but very rarely are they made subjects of discipline. They come and go in their pews, they preach and pray in their pulpits; and the case is exceptional where they suffer any loss of standing. Instances quite numerous could be given to show, that they are, almost uniformly, treated with the most marked consideration.

This, in my judgment, is as it should be. Although I hold very rigidly to the principle of church communion, if a brother in a Baptist church cherishes the opposite view as a sacred opinion, I would have him neither denounced as a sentimentalist, nor excluded as a heretic. The order of the ordinances is not the all and in all of the denomination. He who differs from the great majority of his brethren on this point, may be in strict accord with them on all others. He may be inconsistent as a Baptist in this respect, and yet may be a very thor-

ough Baptist in every thing else. Orthodoxy on this subject should not be magnified, even in appearance, above orthodoxy on more important questions, such as the supremacy of the Scripture, or the spirituality of church-membership. We cannot see alike on all other doctrines : no wonder, then, that there is some disagreement on this. He who entertains the open theory, as a theory, has a right to fair treatment and candid consideration. Even if he occasionally communes with other denominations, as such an act does not necessarily compromise those who could not honestly do so, he should not be dealt with as an alien ; for in such case he is responsible to God alone. He may have reasons for his course, which may be so native to his temperament and modes of thought, as to be beyond the comprehension and sympathy of his brethren. His act may be born of an inward craving, which they have never felt. Absence from home in foreign lands, circumstances in which he may be placed, where he may feel that a refusal to partake with others might do more harm to Christianity than participation ; and even other considerations, may influence his judgment. Such departures from the practice of the denomination should not be approved ; and yet it may not be best to make them matters of discipline. They may be criticised in a tolerant manner ; and the privilege of defence, in the same manner, should not be refused.

An enlightened exchange of views upon the subject will always do more than high-handed discipline towards remedying the defect.

If it is thought that I carry toleration too far in this respect, then I must confess, that the denomination of which I am a member is largely to blame. She has taught me, by her practice in such cases, what I candidly avow in sentiment. Not a few of her leading men, both lay and cleric, have partaken of the Supper with those who are members of other bodies; and I have never known her to discipline them for their conduct. The newspapers may have censured them, but the churches have invariably left them alone. They may have felt that the matter lay beyond their jurisdiction, or that its investigation was hindered by obstacles almost insurmountable; or, what is most likely, they may have been constrained by a charity which "suffereth long," to overlook, what they were far from approving.

But, as I have intimated, there is a limit to such toleration. If nothing will satisfy the open-communion brother, but the recognition of his theory in the practice of the churches, then the time has come for resistance to his revolutionary programme. If he insists that they shall adopt his principles, let down all barriers, receive all professors to the table, then as he is demanding that their faith shall conform to his, they can not be warranted in bearing much longer with him.

No amount of declamation, vituperation, or re-crimination, may be able to convince them. They may modestly, but sincerely, believe the brother to be in error, and humbly, but firmly think that they have some rights which are not to be ignored. Controversy will be inevitable; and the issue must be separation.

As it stands in fact, the conscience of the denomination will not permit her to assume the responsibility of making common cause with the open-communionist. If, therefore, in defence of her integrity she casts the innovator out, is she fairly liable to censure? Is she under such circumstances amenable to the charge of doing violence to his liberty, when she is but guarding her own? Should the innovator be unwilling to recognize this aspect of the case, and be guilty of disturbing the peace of the church, how shall he be treated? How would other religious bodies deal with such a disturber? If he avows his intention, as far as in him lies, to enforce his peculiar view; if he invites men and women to the Lord's table, whom for reasons satisfactory to themselves his brethren cannot welcome; and if he disregards the convictions of others, ridiculing those entertaining them, and possibly misrepresenting their motives and their spirit, — shall he not be adjudged guilty of attempted tyranny? Shall he not be regarded as despotic in conduct,

and on this account, if on no other, be excluded from fellowship?

In this way, and in this way only, can the present drift towards looseness be checked, and at the same time the gentle spirit of toleration be preserved.

I have been thus particular in these statements because it is now repeatedly charged upon the Baptists, that at last they are proving recreant to the doctrine of soul-liberty. Never was there more cruel slander. They are as catholic, and as charitable as at any former period of their history. They concede to all Christians what they claim for themselves,—the right to guard their faith from insult, and their churches from anarchy. They have made a way for all creeds to stand on equal footing before the law; and for this they have incurred reproach, and sacrificed every thing but honor. Were it needful, they would do the same again, and shed the last drop of blood to insure to the humblest disciple unfettered freedom to speak what he believes, to practise what he thinks. Having done this in the years gone by, willing to do so still, is it a great thing for them to ask from their brethren the privileges of that liberty, which they concede to others?

It has been said, that the Baptists are losing some of their more refined clergymen, on account of their close communion. If the statement is correct, the ministers who withdraw, because license, in effect,

is not substituted for law, can well be spared. Such chaff may be permitted to fly: it will always be light enough to be blown by every wind of popularity. Although it is more delicate and refined than the wheat, it is hardly as valuable. Baptists can afford to be purged of proud, indolent humors: the body will be more vigorous in consequence. But they may rest assured, if the powerful undercurrent which has borne against their denomination for centuries has not sapped her foundations, a thousand lesser tides can only froth and bubble on the surface, and waste their strength, not hers. So long as there is generosity and manliness in human hearts to follow with sympathetic, and, yet, exulting spirit the reverses and the triumphs of their ancestral principles, so long as the justice of their cause shines forth both broad and clear through the din and the dust of the conflict, there shall never be wanting ministers, prepared to take their position on the well-trodden battle-field in defence of liberty and law.

Harrington, a Baptist writer of note in Cromwell's time, penned these significant words: "Where liberty of conscience is entire, it includes civil liberty." This passage we quote, that those who are not of us in faith may realize, that this sacred cause cannot be indifferent to the citizens of our country. They can

no more afford than we to see its progress checked, or its supremacy diminished.

Liberty of conscience and civil liberty are sisters, but the first is the elder of the two. Where the first exists, where the intellect spurns shackles, and the heart refuses allegiance to any lord but God, the other will soon appear; for noble people will be nobly ruled, and they who are freemen before God, will not long consent to continue in bonds to man.

M. Jules Simon (*La Liberté de Conscience*), has recently said, that "liberty of conscience is certainly the most necessary of all our liberties: it is the condition and the source of all the others." His countryman M. Édouard Laboulaye, in an elaborate passage, confirms this sentiment. He shows, that every kind of spiritual despotism results in ignorance and fanaticism, that the pretended religious unity of Spain and Italy is death, while the religious freedom of England and the United States is conspicuously beneficial. Castelar, in his celebrated papers on "Republicanism" creates a similar impression. The real glory of our country in its origin and progress, he ascribes to the freedom all enjoy of reading and studying an open Bible.

If, then, to this lofty principle we owe the spirit which called these States into being, we can be no less dependent upon it for their maintenance. If we would preserve our civil institutions, we must pre-

serve our love of religious liberty. It is in the sense of obligation to God which it fosters, it is in the self-governing power which it imparts, and it is in the inveterate hatred of every species of tyranny which it excites, that the security of a free commonwealth is lodged. A free nation cannot be stricken down as long as she is guarded by a free church. Only by the way of her heart's blood can her sister's life be reached.

Behold the Capitol of our nation, that lifts its mighty dome towards heaven! The sculptured marble sparkles in the sunlight, and the long rows of massive pillars gleam as shafts of silver. As it stands serene and immovable, it looks at once the model of aspiration and stability. Hark, the muttering thunder! see how the dark clouds lower on the magnificent structure, and the shadows grow less distinct in its recesses. The golden skies assume a leaden tinge, and the storm-rack gathers into rugged masses rolling earthward like the billows of a tempestuous ocean. Distant echoing thunder comes nearer, its reverberations growing louder, until its swift-repeating peals appall the stoutest heart. From the overhanging blackness flash follows flash, and now the thunderbolt comes crashing down. Well may the spectators pause; well may they with uplifted hands exclaim, "Our country's Capitol is ruined!"

Timid ones, be not afraid! The glaring lightning has not touched the proud pinnacle which seemed to invite its stroke. Only for a moment it glistened round its summit, like an aureole converted into anger. Why has it paused in its swift career? Examine more closely, and you will discover projecting above the glittering dome, rising nearer than it to heaven, an unpretending but lofty rod, which has caught the descending fire and diverted it from the endangered pile. The conducting medium has drawn to itself, and has buried in the earth the swift, consuming wrath of God.

The Capitol at Washington fitly symbolizes the nation, strong, glorious, free, reposing in stability and beauty beneath the calm serenity of heaven. We cannot hope that it will always be thus peaceful and secure. Storms must gather, and dangers come. Already there are signs of tempests wild and high. Let us rejoice that the nation is not at their mercy. The modest rod that penetrates the sky from yonder dome is the expressive sign of that which is almost unrecognizable to the common eye, soul-liberty. Bound to the walls of our political structure, and rising higher than its pinnacle, soul-liberty must avert the bolts of dire calamity, come they from the thick clouds of passion and ambition, or from the thicker ones of ignorance and fanaticism. Though tempests may rage, and lightnings flash, in vain

their fury. Partisan politicians, fierce demagogues, corrupt officials, may hurl themselves like unbridled thunderbolts against the integrity of our civil institutions; but impotent to harm are they so long as soul-liberty endures, and holds communion with the sky.

We stand on the threshold of a new age: the present is creating the future. *You*, my readers, are the present; and it is for you to dash down, and crush beneath the weight of your sacred indignation every barrier to the continued progress of Liberty. From her hands you must unfasten every shackle, from her wings you must unloose every bond, from her feet you must remove every dragging chain. If she is faint, you must revive her; if she is weak, you must strengthen her; if she is maligned, you must vindicate her. To do this you must enrich her with knowledge, invigorate her with justice, and adorn her with beauty. Then from your side shall she speed her way into ages you shall never see, and into lands you shall never tread, to bless them with her sublime philanthropy forever.

“ There’s a fount about to stream,
There’s a light about to beam,
There’s a warmth about to glow,
There’s a flower about to blow,
There’s a midnight blackness changing into gray:
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way !

Aid the dawning, tongue and pen!
Aid it, hopes of honest men!
Aid it, paper ! aid it, type!
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken into play:
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way !”

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